



Christians After the Rapture

Told Through Four Interrelated Parables

**A Study about Events Occurring
After the Spirit Has Acquired the
Bride and Removed All Christians**

Arlen L. Chitwood

This book is based on the things dealt with in four consecutive, interrelated parables forming part of the Olivet Discourse, as seen in Matthew's gospel (24:40-25:30).

This discourse followed Christ cursing the fruitless fig tree (typifying fruitless Israel) and His subsequent announcement that the proffered kingdom would be taken from Israel and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:19, 33-43).

Then, immediately before giving this discourse, Christ singled out the Scribes and Pharisees, dealt with them in accord with their actions, and left the house of Israel "desolate" (Matt. 23:1-39).

With the proffered kingdom taken from Israel and the house left desolate, the Jewish people would *NOW* have to await their Messiah "in the way of thy judgments" (Isa. 26:8; Matt. 23:38, 39; 24:4-39)

And, with a new recipient of the kingdom about to be called into existence (Acts 2:1, 2), *one could ONLY expect this new entity to be dealt with in this discourse — an entity previously introduced relative to the kingdom in Matt. 13:1-35 [cf. 12:14-45]; 16:17-19; 21:43.*

And, that is EXACTLY how the discourse is structured.

The first part of the discourse is given over to *Israel*, during and following the Tribulation, concluding with the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah (Matt. 24:4-39).

The concluding parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah (vv. 32-39) present *the SAME word picture from TWO different vantage points — one parabolic, the other typical*. And both present overall word pictures of that previously seen in vv. 4-31.

THEN, four consecutive parables follow, providing a complete parabolic word picture of actions surrounding *this new entity* about to be brought into existence to be the recipient of the proffered kingdom.

These four consecutive parables (Matt. 24:40-25:30) have to do with *the new recipient of the kingdom — the one new man* "in Christ" — both during and following the dispensation which was about to begin (the present dispensation). But, the emphasis in all four parables is upon events following this dispensation, following the rapture, when the actions of those comprising this *new man* — the actions of *Christians* — come under review, by Christ Himself, at His judgment seat.

And that revealed in these four parables is what this book is about.

Christians

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by
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Introduction

This book is about the activities and experiences of Christians during and beyond the present dispensation, as seen through the things revealed in four successive, interrelated parables, beginning in Matt. 24:40 and extending through Matt. 25:30.

And this introduction, taking matters back to the beginning of the offer of the kingdom to Israel — back to John the Baptist's ministry in Matthew chapter three and working through parts of the book, leading into the Olivet Discourse — *will show EXACTLY HOW and WHY these four parables MUST be understood and dealt with after the manner seen in the preceding, introductory paragraph.*

NOT Israel, but...

A problem which often surfaces about the four parables in Matt. 24:40-25:30 is attempting to relate these parables to *Israel* rather than *Christians*.

However, relating that seen in these parables to Israel would be impossible in several respects:

1) Israel couldn't possibly be in view, for these parables have to do with household servants during a time (present dispensation [and immediately beyond]) *when the House of Israel lies desolate*, during a time when God *is NOT dealing with Israel in a national respect*. Daniel's Seventy-Week time piece remains in stop mode throughout this time.

2) Further, these parables have to do with "the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. 25:1ff), a kingdom which had been offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel *PRIOR to the time that these parables were given* (cf. Matt. 3:1ff; 4:17; 13:1-35; 16:17-19; 21:19, 33-43).

3) Thus, these parables *CAN'T possibly be about Israel*. They can *ONLY be about the new recipients of the kingdom, those comprising the one new man* "in Christ," a completely new entity called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (*ref. section beginning on p. ix in this introduction*).

Then, so that there can be *NO mistake* ascertaining and understanding the preceding, it is evident that *each parable* is about the *SAME thing (from a different perspective)*, with each succeeding parable shedding light on the preceding parable(s).

NOT the Rapture, but...

And, though these parables deal with the activities of Christians during the present dispensation, the emphasis is *ALWAYS upon the experiences of Christians beyond the dispensation, beyond the rapture.*

The rapture itself is NOT a subject of these parables and is UN-SEEN in ALL four parables, many notwithstanding.

(For information on the rapture, refer to the author's book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

Though the rapture occurs at the close of the present dispensation — moving Christians from the present time (the present dispensation) to the time beyond (beyond this dispensation, when Christians will appear before the judgment seat, with a view to Christ's millennial reign) — again, the rapture *is NOT* a subject dealt with in any part of any one of these four parables.

The rapture is dealt with a number of places in Scripture, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, *BUT* it is dealt with quite sparingly — *actually, VERY sparingly* — compared to the numerous sections of Scripture dealing with Christians both during and beyond the present dispensation (*i.e.*, preceding and following the rapture).

Man though, like he does so many things in Scripture (*e.g.*, centering on salvation by grace, ignoring or placing little emphasis upon the remainder of the salvation message), has turned this whole thing around, centering on the rapture instead of following Scripture and centering on events both before and after the rapture, particularly after.

And doing this, he, more often than not, begins seeing the rapture in verses which have *NOTHING* to do with the rapture (*e.g.*, in at least two of the parables dealt with in this book, sometimes all four; or in verses such as I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; II Thess. 2:1, 3; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10).

And it should go without saying that applying Scriptures of the preceding nature to the rapture removes them from that to which they do apply, having to do with Christians either before or after the rapture.

The preceding would reflect on two major problems often seen among Bible teachers in Christendom today:

- 1) *NOT* placing the emphasis where Scripture places the emphasis.
- 2) Using passages or verses to teach things *NOT* taught in these passages or verses.

And teachings along the preceding lines are, of course, followed by individuals under their ministry being improperly taught.

Near and Far Contexts, Subject Matter

To see and understand the complete, unfolding story — using Matthew's gospel, *moving FROM Israel TO the Church relative to the repository for the proffered kingdom* — an individual needs to pick up with John the Baptist's ministry in Matthew chapter three and move from that point through the gospel.

And this is what will be done throughout the remainder of this introduction.

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

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judaea with a single, simple message: "Repent ye: 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, in 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.

2) Reaction to the Message

John opened the message to Israel concerning the proffered kingdom, and Christ continued this message following John being imprisoned. Then the Twelve, and later 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 (covenantal disobedience, including harlotry, ultimately resulting in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities [722, 605 B.C. respectively]).

And this disobedience had continued to mark the history of the nation down through the centuries, to that time when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, heralding the Messiah.

And, apart from some who believed here and there, unbelief and rejection continued, *with NO change* throughout the next 2,000 years, into modern times.

3) Rejection of the Message

Rejection 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.

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 the Pharisaical Scribes) — fundamental, legalistic religious leaders — were, by far, the largest of the religious sects 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 who was both blind and dumb, a man also possessed with a demon (v. 22). 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 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 sign 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. 1:2; 8:1]); 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 *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, His going down by the seaside, and His beginning to speak in parables* in Matthew chapter thirteen (*cf.* Acts 7, 8 in the re-offer of the kingdom).

4) Christ Departs the House

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 ("When any one heareth the word of the kingdom..." [vv. 19, 24]) 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). And the use of "house" and "seaside" in this chapter 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 to Israel per se*.

Because of the subject matter — *the kingdom of the heavens, having previously been taken from Israel* — *these parables would have to STILL 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*.

BUT, though this new entity — a people other than Israel, dealt with numerous places in Old Testament typology — is introduced after the manner seen in Christ's ministry to Israel, the offer of the kingdom still remained open to Israel, with Christ going back inside the house and giving three additional parables.

5) *Attention Called to the Church*

Them sometime following Christ giving these parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, He again dealt with this new entity that He had previously referenced in these parables.

This time He used the Greek word *ekklesia* — meaning, “called out,” referring to one group of individuals removed from another group, or groups of individuals — translated, “Church,” in English texts.

Christ led into His second reference to this new entity by first asking His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

And following their response concerning what people were saying, Christ then asked, “But whom say ye that I am?” (Matt. 16:13-15).

And Peter spoke up, answering, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16), which is the most complete and best succinct response that he could possibly have given.

Note Jesus words to Peter in this respect:

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (vv. 17-19).

The discourse begins with Christ referencing Himself as “the Son of man,” a Messianic title (*cf.* Ps. 8:4-6; Dan. 7:13, 14).

Then Peter's response is in complete keeping with Christ's statement and question — Messianic as well.

“Sonship” has to do with *rulership*. *ONLY* “Sons” rule/can rule in God's kingdom, whether angels (present) or man (future).

And “Christ,” *the anointed One* (prophets, priests, and kings were anointed in the O.T.), *could ONLY have to do with REGALITY, with His KINGSHIP, for THAT was the subject at hand.*

Note *the same thing* seen in the stated purpose for the eight signs in John's gospel — "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." (John 20:30, 31).

Or, the same thing can again be seen in Martha's statement to Jesus in John 11:27: "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God..." And Martha's statement would be in complete keeping with the signs and purpose for signs in John's gospel.

ALL is REGAL and MESSIANIC.

And this is the way Christ chose to introduce the Church for the second time in this gospel, with statements concerning both mentions of the Church being *REGAL and MESSIANIC* as well.

The Church was to be built on Peter's statement; and Christ's statements in connection with the Church *were of EXACTLY the same nature, having to do with the kingdom of the heavens* (cf. vv. 18, 19).

6) *The Fruitless Fig Tree and Beyond*

Then, going on to Matt. 21:18ff, the whole matter of the proffered kingdom, Israel, and the Church is brought to a head.

(Note that *ALL events* from Matt. 21:18 to Christ giving the Olivet Discourse [Matt. 24, 25] *occurred on the SAME day, two days before Christ's crucifixion* [Matt. 26:1, 2].)

En route from Bethany to Jerusalem, Christ hungered, saw a fig tree, went over to it, and found *leaves ONLY, NO fruit. And Christ THEN cursed the fig tree* (Matt. 21:19),

The fruitless fig tree typified *fruitless Israel, the Lord's Vineyard* in Isa. 5:1-7 (cursed for one age, *the Messianic Era*, relative to the proffered kingdom of the heavens [Matt. 21:19; ref. Ch. VIII, "The Fig Tree," in the author's book, *Israel — Seven Years, Then...*]).

And, going on into Jerusalem and dealing with Israel's religious leaders (vv. 23-32), then giving the parable of the Householder and His vineyard, Christ announced that *the proffered kingdom would be taken from Israel and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* (vv. 33-43).

THEN, immediately before giving the Olivet Discourse, Christ singled out the Scribes and Pharisees, dealt with them in accord with their actions, and left the house of Israel "desolate" (Matt. 23:1-39).

With the proffered kingdom taken from Israel and the house left desolate, the Jewish people would *NOW* have to await their Messiah “in the way of thy judgments” (Isa. 26:8; Matt. 23:38, 39; 24:4-39).

And, with a new recipient of the kingdom about to be called into existence (Acts 2:1, 2), *one could ONLY expect this new entity to be dealt with in this subsequent discourse given to the disciples — an entity previously introduced relative to the kingdom in Matt. 13:1-35 [cf. 12:14-45]; 16:17-19; 21:43.*

And, that is EXACTLY how the discourse is structured.

The first part of the discourse is given over to *Israel*, during and following the Tribulation, concluding with the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah (Matt. 24:4-39).

The concluding parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah (vv. 32-39) present *the SAME word picture from TWO different vantage points — one parabolic, the other typical.* And both present overall word pictures of that previously seen in vv. 4-31.

THEN, four consecutive parables follow, providing a complete, parabolic word picture of actions surrounding *this new entity* about to be brought into existence to be the recipient of the proffered kingdom.

These four consecutive parables (Matt. 24:40-25:30) have to do with *the new recipient of the kingdom — the one new man* “in Christ” — both during and following the dispensation which was about to begin (the present dispensation).

But, the emphasis in all four parables is upon events following this dispensation, following the rapture, when the actions of those comprising this *new man* — the actions of *Christians* — come under review, by Christ Himself, at His judgment seat, with a view to the kingdom.

7) The Subject Matter Throughout

The introduction of the Church — beginning in Matt. 13 and continuing into Matt. 16, then continuing in the four consecutive parables in Matt. 24, 25 — *is REGAL throughout, in EXACT keeping with the subject matter throughout Matthew’s gospel.*

And the preceding MUST be recognized and understood IF an individual is to correctly understand the reason for the existence of the Church in the world today.

(Refer to complementary data in Appendix I of this book.)

1

ONE TAKEN, ANOTHER LEFT *Received Alongside, OR Turned Away*

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:40-44).

Philip Mauro, during the first part of the last century, said:

“We greatly fear the consequences of the tendency observable in certain quarters to treat the millennial kingdom of the Son as a thing of little interest to the saints of God.”

The coming reign of Christ is the climactic event of the ages pertaining to man in relation to this present earth. *ALL Scripture, after some fashion, moves toward this event.*

ALL Scripture MUST move in this direction, for the established foundation upon which ALL subsequent Scripture rests (Gen. 1:1-2:3) was SET in this manner at the beginning. And to ignore this fact can ONLY prove detrimental to ANY sound method of Biblical study.

In the *Jewish section* of the Olivet Discourse (24:4-39), the kingdom of Christ follows God’s dealings with Israel during and after the Tribulation.

In the *Christian section* of this discourse (24:40-25:30), the kingdom of Christ likewise follows God’s dealings with Christians during and at the end of the present dispensation.

And exactly the same thing is seen concerning God's dealings with the Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation in *the Gentile section* of this discourse (25:31-46).

The reign of Christ over the earth is *the consummative event in view throughout the Olivet Discourse*. God's dealings with the Jews during and following the Tribulation, His dealings with Christians during and at the end of the present dispensation, and His dealings with the Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation are *ALL intimately related to the kingdom which follows these dealings*.

The Christian section of the Olivet Discourse centers around events during and at the end of that time which God has set aside (the present dispensation) in order to accomplish a dual purpose regarding His Son's coming reign over the earth:

- 1) *To call out the many sons (the Son's co-heirs) of Heb. 2:10.*
- 2) *To acquire a bride for God's Son (Gen. 24).*

(Israel and the Church are dealt with in Scripture in both masculine and feminine respects.

Both are dealt with in relation to *sonship* [firstborn sons], and both are dealt with in relation to *marriage* [as a bride, a wife].

Both are dealt with in the former respect [sonship] because *ONLY sons can rule in God's kingdom* [ONLY firstborn sons in the human realm]; and both are dealt with in the latter respect [a bride, a wife] because, as God Himself established the matter in the opening two chapters of Genesis, the King CANNOT reign without a consort queen [God and Israel; Christ and the Church].)

Israel has been set aside for a period of time which will last for one dispensation, 2,000 years, and during this time God is calling out the "companions" who will occupy the throne as "joint-heirs" with His Son during the coming age (cf. Rom. 8:17-23; Heb. 1:9; 3:1, 14) — as both *the many sons* who will reign with His Son, and as *the consort queen* who will ascend the throne and reign alongside His Son.

And these individuals *MUST* be dealt with at the end of this present dispensation, with their calling in view.

THIS is what the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is about.

Responsibility, Accountability, the Goal

The Lord's reference to one taken and another left opens the first of four parallel parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. And each parable actually has to do with *the SAME thing*, though each parable presents matters *from a different perspective*.

Each parable has to do with *the Lord's dealings with His servants (Christians) during present and future times, with the coming kingdom in view*. And, with each parable presenting matters from a different perspective, all four parables viewed together present *a complete, composite picture in a threefold fashion*:

- 1) *The Christians' present responsibility.*
- 2) *The Christians' future accountability.*
- 3) *The relationship of both to the coming kingdom of Christ.*

Christians have *a responsibility* to live their lives in a manner which reflects their high calling. "Salvation" is for *a purpose*, and this purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. Christians have been called "unto his kingdom and glory" (I Thess. 2:12; cf. I Peter 5:1, 10; II Peter 1:3). And the Biblical picture of one's salvation is *NOT* being saved *FROM* ("from hell") *BUT* being saved *UNTO* ("unto his kingdom and glory").

"Responsibility," in turn, demands *accountability*. Every Christian will one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ to render an account concerning *how he carried out his responsibility*.

ALL things will be revealed in the presence of a righteous, omnipotent, omniscient Judge (Rev. 1:12-20). The previous works of the ones being judged will come under review, and the results will have a direct bearing on the Christians' position in the kingdom which follows.

The purpose for the judgment seat, in this respect, is in keeping with the purpose for the entire present dispensation. God is today *calling out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with His Son during the coming age*, and the decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat concerning these individuals will have to do with their being placed in or being denied one of the numerous proffered positions which the co-heirs will occupy with Christ.

Accordingly, *the end or goal toward which EVERYTHING moves in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is the coming kingdom*. It is the kingdom with its glory to which Christians have been called, and any Christian failing to realize his calling therein will have failed to realize the very purpose for his salvation.

The coming kingdom is NOT ONLY the end or goal toward which everything moves in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse BUT in the other two sections as well.

God's dealings with the Jewish people in the first section (24:4-39) occur during and immediately following the Tribulation and lead into *the kingdom*, and God's dealings with the Gentiles in the third section as well (25:31-46) occur at the end of the Tribulation (following God's dealings with the other two divisions of mankind) and also lead into *the kingdom*.

And, as evident, in a broader respect, *the kingdom is the end or goal toward which EVERYTHING in Scripture moves, save events in the few references describing conditions during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (e.g., I Cor. 15:24-28; parts of Rev. 21, 22).*

Beginning with the opening chapters of Genesis, the emphasis is upon *man holding the sceptre, ruling over a restored earth; and this emphasis NEVER changes throughout Scripture*.

Christ's discourse on the Mount of Olives moves more to the end of the matter and presents summary information relative to concluding events in God's dealings with the three groups of mankind (Jew, Christian, and Gentile), *with the kingdom, as throughout Scripture, the OBJECTIVE or GOAL in view*.

It is clearly shown in the parable of the Householder and His servant and in the parable of the talents (Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14-30) that man ultimately placed in the position of "ruler" is the focal point (*cf.* 24:47; 25:21, 23).

And it is no different in the other two parallel parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40-44; 25:1-13).

Note that each parable begins in a similar fashion: "Then..." (24:40-44); "Who then..." (24:45-51); "Then..." (25:1-13); "For it is just as a man...[literal rendering, referring back to the parable of the ten virgins in vv. 1-13, and consequently back to the previous two parables in this section, in 24:40-51]" (25:14-30).

Then note that each parable has been given to provide additional information which will help explain another parable. In this respect, the words “Who then” and “Then,” opening the second and third parables, refer back to the previous parable/parables.

The first parable (vv. 40-44), for example, closes with the exhortation to *Watch, Be Ready*, “for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (vv. 42, 44).

The second parable immediately following (vv. 45-51) opens with the words, “*Who then* is a faithful and wise servant...” The allusion is back to the preceding parable (vv. 40-44).

The parable of the Householder and His servant [vv. 45-51] has been given to provide additional information, helping to explain the preceding parable dealing with one taken and the other left [vv. 40-44].

Both parables concern *the SAME thing* — faithfulness or unfaithfulness on the part of the Lord’s servants, resulting in their being accorded or being denied positions as *rulers with Christ in the kingdom*. And so it is with the following two parables.

This connection between the four parables can possibly be seen slightly clearer in the opening verse of the fourth parable. Note that the words, “the kingdom of heaven is” (v. 14, KJV), are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek text. The word “as” is a translation of the Greek word *hosper*, which is a connective particle meaning “just as” or “even as.”

This is the same word translated “as” earlier in the Olivet Discourse (24:37, 38), comparing the days of Noah with the days of the coming of the Son of Man. And the word is used in the same sense beginning the parable of the talents.

This word, beginning the parable of the talents, is used as a connective to show that the parable about to follow is *EXACTLY like* the parable which has preceded, giving rise to the translation, “For it is just as a man...”

The parable of the talents was given to help explain the previous parable, the parable of the ten virgins (or, for that matter, the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins as well).

This parable concerns *EXACTLY the same thing* — faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the Lord’s servants, resulting in their being accorded

or being denied entrance into the marriage festivities and subsequent positions as rulers with Christ in the kingdom.

Received or Turned Away

The words in the text, “the one shall be taken, and the other left,” are often misunderstood by expositors. And through this misunderstanding, some mistakenly teach that these verses refer to *the rapture*, with one removed from the earth and another left behind on the earth. This though is *NOT* at all what is in view.

The mistake comes from thinking that *the ones left remain in the field or at the mill*, while the others are removed from these places. Reference to the Greek text, the context, and parallel Scripture though will show that *this CANNOT possibly be the case*.

These verses reveal the Lord’s dealings with two Christians who will be in the field and two other Christians who will be grinding at the mill (representative individuals, places, and occupations) when He returns to reckon with His servants; and this reckoning will occur, *NOT in the field or at the mill, BUT before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven following the rapture. The time and place of this reckoning are ALWAYS the same in Scripture (ref. section in parenthesis, p. 10).*

The word “taken” (vv. 40, 41) is a translation of the Greek word *paralambano*. This is a compound word comprised of *para* (“beside,” or “alongside”) and *lambano* (“to take,” or “to receive”). Thus, the word goes a step beyond just simply *taking* or *receiving*. It is *taking or receiving the person alongside or to oneself* (cf. Matt. 17:1; 20:17 where *paralambano* is used).

This would be the word used referring to the reception of an individual as an “associate” or a “companion,” which is actually what is involved in this passage.

Then, the word “left” (vv. 40, 41) is a translation of the Greek word *aphiemi*, which is used in an antithetical respect to *paralambano*. And in the light of the way *paralambano* is used, *aphiemi* could possibly best be understood by translating the word, “turn away.”

That which is involved in this passage has to do with *Christians before the judgment seat either being received in an intimate respect or being turned away in an opposite respect*.

And the parable of the Householder and His servant, which immediately follows, is given to help explain these things.

These verses *are NOT* referring to the rapture at all, but *to faithful and unfaithful Christians in different walks of life as they appear before the judgment seat in heaven.*

Reference to the parallel passage in Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse shows this same thing:

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (21:36).

Some expositors have also taken this verse as a reference to the rapture (usually those attempting to teach selective rapture); but, again, *such is NOT correct.* This verse is actually the parallel in Luke's gospel for not only Matt. 24:40-44 but also for the three parables which follow, covering the remainder of the Christian section of the discourse (the parable of the Householder and His servant [24:45-51], the parable of the ten virgins [25:1-13], and the parable of the talents [25:14-30]).

Again, reference to the Greek text, the context, and related Scripture will show *EXACTLY* how this verse is to be understood.

The main problems in translation and interpretation lie in the words "that ye may be accounted worthy" and "escape all these things."

The words, "that ye may be accounted worthy," could be better translated, "that you may prevail over [in the sense of being strong and winning a victory]"; and the words, "escape [*lit.*, 'escape out of'] all these things," refer back to the immediate context, dealing with "surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (vv. 34, 35).

This verse is, thus, exhorting Christians to watch and pray relative to deliverance from involvement in the ways and practices of the world (Eph. 6:18; *cf.* vv. 10-17).

Weymouth, in his translation of the New Testament, captures the correct thought from the Greek text about as well as any English version presently available (also see the NASB):

“Beware of slumbering; at all times pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man.”

Note also Wuest’s “Expanded Translation”:

“But be circumspect, attentive, ready, in every season being in prayer, in order that you may have sufficient strength to be escaping all these things which are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The words “watch,” and “pray” are in a present tense showing, contextually, a linear (continuous) action in the Greek text.

The thought is that of Christians *continually watching* (always being alert, on guard) and *continually praying* for the strength necessary *to escape out of the ways and practices of the world*.

“Escape out of” is the translation of an aorist infinitive in the Greek text, showing deliverance viewed as *eventual* (i.e., viewed as the result of Christians continually watching and praying). And, viewed as *a whole* (as in Weymouth’s translation), this deliverance would occur on particular occasions at different times.

Contextually, this deliverance is *NOT a one-time event* (as the rapture), but repeated occurrences (as in Wuest’s translation). And *the GOAL* of the entire process is Christians ultimately being privileged to “stand before the Son of man.”

(*Aorist and present tenses* in the Greek text are often misunderstood and misused. In fact, a lot of false doctrine has resulted from a misunderstanding and misuse of these tenses.

The word “aorist” is simply an anglicized Greek word, *aoratos*, which means “unseen,” “invisible” [*aoratos* is the word *horatos*, meaning “to see,” negated by the prefix “a,” making the word *aoratos* mean just the opposite — “not to see”]. And this word, used relative to “tense” in Greek grammar, refers to the “action” of the verb [unseen action].

Action in the aorist tense is presented simply as occurring, without reference to its progress [which, from the verb itself, *CAN NOT* be seen]. And this action, seen contextually, can be very linear [continuous, occurring over time] or punctiliar [occurring at one or more points in time].

[A misunderstanding and misuse of the aorist tense usually occurs through attempting *to see what the meaning of the name of the tense itself clearly states CAN'T be seen — action occurring, which is invariably and erroneously viewed as punctiliar.*

This action is represented on paper [in grammar books] by a dot, simply because it *CAN'T* be seen to describe the type action (whether linear or punctiliar). And *this dot* is what often misleads people, thinking that punctiliar action is being described by *the dot*, which isn't the case at all].

On the other hand, *the present tense*, where action is seen, serves to show both linear and punctiliar action. The general rule is that if punctiliar action is not shown by the context, then linear action is to be understood.

For example, “believeth” in John 3:15, 16 is the translation of a present participle in the Greek text; and, except for the context [v. 14], the word in both verses would be understood in a linear respect. The context though shows that both words are to be understood as *punctiliar* — i.e., simply believe at a point in time, *NOT* keep on believing [it was *look and live in the type* (v. 14), and it is, as well (it *CANNOT* be any other way), *look and live in the antitype* (vv. 15, 16)].

Then note “believeth” in Rom. 1:16, also the translation of a present participle in the Greek text. But this time the context doesn't show that the present tense is *to be understood any way other than linear [continuous]*.

Thus, the thought presented in the verse would be to keep on believing, keep on exercising faith [note, contextually, that this verse has *NOTHING* to do with eternal salvation; rather, it has to do with belief, faith, exercised by those who are already saved].)

Standing before, or in the presence of, the Son of Man in the passage from Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse (21:34-36) is synonymous with *being received in an intimate manner by the Lord* in the parallel section in Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:40-44).

The thought is presented another way in Ps. 24:3, 4:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Psalm chapter twenty-four is a Messianic Psalm; and the expression, “to stand before the Son of man” in Luke 21:36, is Messianic as well.

Ascending “the hill [referring to the ‘kingdom’; note Ps. 2:6] of the Lord” or *standing* “before the Son of man” are reserved for “associates” or “companions” who will rule as *co-heirs with Christ* (cf. Heb. 1:9; 3:1, 14; “fellows” [1:9] and “partakers” [3:1, 14] are translations of the same Greek word [*metochoi*], which could be better rendered, “associates” or “companions”).

(The rapture is ALWAYS dealt with relative to those being taken and that which lies ahead, NEVER in relation to individuals left behind, escaping something, etc. [cf. Gen. 5:21-24; 24:61-67; I Cor. 15:51-57; I Thess. 4:13-5:9; Rev. 1:10ff; 4:1ff].

This will show one major problem with trying to relate verses such as Matt. 24:40-44; Luke 21:36; I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10 to the rapture.

To further illustrate and show that *events occurring either before or after the rapture, but NOT the rapture, are in view in Matt. 24:40-44*, note the reference to “cometh as a thief” in two parallel verses of Scripture — one, the text in Matt. 24; and the other, I Thess. 5:2:

“But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up” [Matt. 24:43a].

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” [I Thess. 5:2].

The setting for I Thess. 5:2 is *beyond the rapture*, with the rapture seen at the end of the previous chapter [vv. 13-17]. This verse has to do with Christians previously removed from Man’s Day, finding themselves in the Lord’s Day [cf. Rev. 1:10], awaiting judgment, wherein salvation or wrath will be manifested [v. 9; cf. I Thess. 1:10].

And Matt. 21:43, within context [vv. 40-44], has to do with EXACTLY the same thing, though expressed in a different manner — *either received alongside, or turned away*.

For information on I Thess. 5, refer to Appendix III, “Not Appointed to Wrath, Destruction,” in the author’s book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

Saving of the Life

The account in Matt. 24:40-44 of individuals either being received in an intimate respect or being turned away in an opposite respect was repeated on another occasion by the Lord in a slightly different setting. Luke 17:34-36 records this same sequence of events following an exhortation to remember Lot's wife and a statement pertaining to *saving or losing one's "life ['soul']"* (vv. 32, 33).

The Greek words *paralambano* and *aphiemi*, used in Matt. 24:40, 41 to show the manner of reception and the opposite manner of rejection, are also used in Luke 17:34-36.

Reception in Matthew is associated with being prepared for the Lord's return through faithfulness and watchfulness (vv. 42-46). And a correct teaching drawn from the overall passage in Luke (vv. 22-37) shows the same thing, with the end result of proper preparation through faithfulness and watchfulness being the salvation of one's "life ['soul']" (v. 33).

The inverse of this would, of course, be true concerning those turned away by the Lord. That is, being unprepared because of unfaithfulness and not watching will result in the loss of one's "life ['soul']" (cf. Matt. 16:24-28; 24:48-51; Luke 17:33).

Several verses in Luke chapter seventeen are very similar to verses in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew (cf. Luke 17:23-27, 31, 37; Matt. 24:17, 18, 23-28, 37-39), leading some expositors to believe that this complete section in Luke is "Jewish."

This though CANNOT be the case, for the verses comprising this section are set in a context which, as in Matt. 24:4-25:30, have both Jewish and Christian parts (with the Jewish part seen first in both passages [Matt. 24:4-39 and Luke 17:23-31]; then, the Christian part follows in both passages [Matt. 24:40-25:30 and Luke 17:32-37]).

(Types in Scripture such as *the days of Noah*, seen in both Matthew's and Luke's accounts, and *the days of Lot*, seen in Luke's account, often lend themselves to more than one central understanding in the antitype.

For example, *Jonah*, in his experiences, typifies future events in the lives of *both of God's firstborn Sons, both Christ and Israel* [Matt. 12:40 relative to *Christ*, and it is evident from the Book of *Jonah* that the overall

type has to do with *Israel*]; or note a verse such as Hosea 11:1, which, contextually, is a reference to *Israel* [both past under Moses and future under Christ], but the verse is used relative to *Christ* in Matt. 2:15.

And the account of the destruction of the cities of the plain during Lot's day is used in a dual manner in Scripture as well — relative to both *Israel* and *Christians*. In Luke 17:28, 29, the account appears in the Jewish part of the discourse. But it is evident from the account in Genesis that Lot's experiences can be applied to *Christians* as well.

Also note that the thoughts derived from the symbolism of eagles hovering over a dead carcass is used relative to *Israel* and the nations in Matt. 24:28, near the end of the Jewish section of the discourse; but in Luke 17:37, this same statement appears at the end of the Christian section of the discourse [ref. Ch. VII in the author's book, *Israel — Seven Years, Then...*.]

1) Remember Lot's Wife

The thought drawn from the account in Genesis chapter nineteen concerning Lot's wife is to keep one's eyes fixed on the goal out ahead, with the implied warning, "Don't look back!"

The ways and practices of the world lie behind, with the things of the mountain lying out ahead ("a mountain" signifying a kingdom); and, with all of this in view, Lot and his family were told, "...escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Gen. 19:17).

The overall thought has to do with *moving away from the things of the world toward the goal of one's calling*. A Christian, with his eyes fixed on the goal, is not to look back to the things of the world. Rather, he is to keep his eyes fixed out ahead, on the things of the mountain, on things relating to the goal of his calling.

Two significant things stand out concerning Lot's wife:

1) *She was delivered from Sodom before judgment fell*, along with her husband and two virgin daughters.

2) *She looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt* (Gen. 19:16, 26).

And, in Luke chapter seventeen, Christ drew spiritual lessons from this account in order to teach His disciples great spiritual truths concerning saving or losing one's "life [soul]" (v. 33), which is associated contextually with either being received alongside the

Lord in an intimate manner or being turned away by the Lord in an opposite manner (vv. 34-36).

Lot, his wife, and his two virgin daughters were told:

“Escape for thy life [‘soul’]; *look not behind thee*, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed [consumed ‘in the iniquity of the city’]” (Gen. 19:17; cf. v. 15).

However, *Lot’s wife looked back toward Sodom*. She looked back toward the things of “the plain” (signifying *the world*, which was about to be destroyed) rather than ahead to “the mountain” (signifying *the kingdom*, which would endure beyond the destruction of the cities of the plain).

Christ stated during His earthly ministry:

“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

The word “looking” in the Greek text, as the words “watch” and “pray” in Luke 21:36, is in a tense showing continuous action. A man beginning a task (putting his hand to the plough) and looking back after the fashion described by the Lord would be continually turning away from the task. He would be headed in one direction but continually looking in another direction. Rather than keeping his eyes fixed on the goal ahead, he would be continually turning away from this goal. Christ declared that *such a man would be unfit* “for the kingdom” (cf. James 1:8).

The mention of Lot’s wife is drawn from Christ’s reference to the days of Noah and the days of Lot in preceding verses, though these verses are in the Jewish part of the discourse (vv. 26-31).

The thought, of course, has to do with the dangers inherent in Christians becoming involved in the ways and practices of the world. Such an involvement will gradually lead Christians away from the things of “the mountain” toward the things of “the plain.”

Over a period of time, Christians involved in the affairs of the world will gradually find their attitudes and interests changing. They will gradually become more and more interested in the things of the plain, while at the same time becoming less and less

interested in the things of the mountain.

The path which they have been called to travel will be in one direction, but their interests will lead them in a different direction. Rather than looking out ahead toward the goal of their calling, they will find themselves looking back toward a world diametrically opposed to this goal.

It is evident that such was the case with Lot's wife.

Lot and his family had dwelled in the cities of the plain for many years. In fact, *Lot seen seated in the gate of Sodom immediately preceding the destruction of the cities of the plain reveals his involvement in the internal affairs of the city* (Gen. 19:1).

The elders were the ones who usually sat in the gate of a city in that day, carrying on civil or legal matters; and it is evident that *Lot had taken his place among them*. Lot had settled down to this extent in Sodom, and related Scripture leaves little question concerning the fact that members of his family had settled down to a similar extent in Sodom.

Then, with his worldly mindset, acquired over several decades of living in the cities of the plain, Lot "lingered" in Sodom with his family after he had been warned concerning the impending destruction.

And he, his wife, and his two virgin daughters had to be *physically removed* by the two angels who had been sent into Sodom (Gen. 19:16).

Then, even outside Sodom and headed away from the city, Lot's wife, contrary to God's command, *looked back*.

She looked back TOWARD a world ("the plain") which was very familiar and away FROM a world ("the mountain") which she apparently knew very little to nothing about.

Her life had evidently been wrapped up in the affairs of Sodom; and when she looked back, that was the end of the matter so far as God was concerned. It was a climactic act, showing where, in the end, her interest lay — *in the affairs of the world, NOT in the things of the mountain*.

Thus, the Lord's warning to His disciples concerning Lot's wife is simply *a warning concerning where involvement in the affairs of this world will ultimately lead*.

Though delivered from Sodom, *Lot's wife lost everything*; and many Christians, though delivered from the destruction awaiting the world in the coming Tribulation (the antitype of the destruction of the cities of the plain), *will, in that coming day, in like manner to Lot's wife, lose everything because of their previous involvement with the world.*

2) Whosoever Shall Seek to Save...Lose...

The Lord's warning to remember Lot's wife, His statement relative to saving or losing one's "life ['soul']," and His statement relative to individuals either being received in an intimate respect or being turned away in an opposite respect are placed together in Luke chapter seventeen and refer to the same central truth (vv. 32-36).

The experience of Lot's wife (v. 32) would parallel the loss of one's life (v. 33) or being turned away by the Lord (vv. 34-36).

And the inverse would be true for an individual keeping his eyes fixed on *the goal out ahead*, "the mountain," rather than looking back toward "the plain." His experience would parallel the saving of his life (v. 33) or being received in an intimate manner by the Lord (vv. 34-36).

Saving or losing one's "life ['soul']" is, contextually, placed within events *following deliverance* from the destruction which befell the cities of the plain. The overall account foreshadows the deliverance which Christians (all Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike) will experience *before the destruction about to befall this present world system, the coming Tribulation*. And the saving or losing of one's "life ['soul']" would have to occur at the same time as in the type — *following deliverance from the world*.

(Note that the events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ will occur in the heavens *AFTER* the present dispensation has run its course, but *BEFORE* the Tribulation begins here on earth [Rev. 1-6].)

There is a deliverance from one judgment to have a part in another judgment, *EXACTLY as seen in the type.*)

Eternal verities *are NOT in view* at all in the account of Lot's wife looking back. This account has to do with one's outlook on *the things of the plain* as contrasted with one's outlook on *the things of the mountain*.

Saving or losing one's "life ['soul']" has to do with events at the judgment seat of Christ.

It is here that Christians will either be received in an intimate respect or be turned away in an opposite respect. Or, as revealed in Luke 21:36, it is here that Christians will either be granted the privilege to "stand before the Son of man" or be denied this privilege.

(Note the contrasting positions occupied by both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, in Genesis chapter nineteen. *Both are seen on the mountain*, but the different positions occupied by each on the mountain are *markedly different*.

Abraham is seen standing before the Lord, occupying the place where he had always stood [Gen. 19:27; cf. Gen. 18:22].

But Lot, even though on the mountain, *found himself in a place separate from the Lord, in a place where he had also always stood* [Gen. 19:30-38; cf. Gen. 13:10-12].)

Scripture elsewhere also teaches the same basic truths concerning saving or losing one's "life ['soul']." *Eternal verities are NEVER in view*, though many erroneously make such an association.

Teaching that the salvation of the soul has to do with the eternal salvation which we presently possess (the salvation of the spirit) is foreign to any New Testament usage of the expression, and such an association will serve *ONLY* to obscure that which Scripture actually teaches on the subject.

Notice three passages of Scripture by way of illustration: Matthew 16:24-27; James 1:21; I Peter 1:9:

"In Matthew," the saving of the soul is *in connection with works which will be revealed and rewards which will be given at the time of Christ's return* (v. 27).

"In James," the saving of the soul is *in connection with a justification by works for those who have already been justified by grace through faith* (cf. 1:21, 22; 2:14-26).

And "in I Peter," the saving of the soul is *in connection with a person receiving the "end [goal]" of his faith* (works emanate out of faithfulness to one's calling [James 2:14-26]; ref. the author's book, *Salvation of the Soul*).

2

THE HOUSEHOLDER AND HIS SERVANT *Provided Instructions, to Be Followed*

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;

And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 24:45-51).

(As shown in the previous chapter in this book, the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse all deal with *EXACTLY the same thing*.

In this respect, each successive parable has been designed to shed light on the preceding parable or parables, with all four parables together presenting a complete, composite picture of the subject under discussion.

And this is in perfect keeping with the nature of a parable. The English word “parable” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word, *parabole*.

Thus, for a proper definition and understanding of “a parable,” one must go back to the Greek word from which the English word was taken.

Parabole is a compound word — *para*, meaning “alongside”; and *bole*, meaning “to throw,” “to cast.”

Thus, “a parable” is *something cast [placed] alongside of something else, i.e., one truth placed alongside of a previous truth*. And the thought has to do with a later truth placed alongside an earlier truth to provide further light upon and help explain the earlier truth.

The Christian section of the Olivet Discourse consists of four parables, with each successive parable having to do with truth placed alongside of previous truth [successive parables placed alongside of one or more previous parables] to help explain the previous truth, the previous parable or parables.)

The Lord’s statements in the first of the four parables, relative to one taken and another left (Matt. 24:40-42), led directly into the thought of *a house being broken up* (vv. 43, 44). That is, both individuals, in each instance, were seen as members of the same house; and the house was broken up by one being “taken [*lit.*, ‘received alongside (received as a companion)’]” and the other being “left [*lit.*, ‘turned away (rejected as a companion)’].”

Then the next parable, the parable of the Householder and His servant, continues this same line of thought, showing that which awaits both faithful and unfaithful servants (providing further light on the previous parable). The faithful servant is appointed to *a regal position in Christ’s kingdom* (v. 47); the unfaithful servant though is *NOT ONLY* rejected for appointment to one of these regal positions *BUT*, instead, is appointed “his portion with the hypocrites.”

The picture is taken from an Eastern household which was composed of a lord, or master, and representatives under him to whom authority had been delegated. These representatives were stewards of the property and thus responsible for the house. They functioned directly under and on behalf of their master, and *their duties revolved solely around the master’s wishes relative to affairs of the household*.

In Matt. 24:45-51, “Christ” is the *Lord*, or *Master*, over the house; and His “servant” (representing many servants) is the one to whom *authority in the house, with its responsibility*, had been delegated during the time of the Householder’s absence.

This is in perfect keeping with the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27).

The “Man” or “Nobleman” — who is *the Lord of the house, the Householder* — called “his own servants” prior to His departure and “delivered unto them his goods,” leaving them with the command, “Occupy till I come” (Matt. 25:14, 15; Luke 19:12, 13).

That is to say, during the time of the Householder’s absence, affairs of His house had been left in charge of representatives to whom delegated authority had been given. These representatives were, in turn, to function directly under and on behalf of their Master, and their duties were *to revolve SOLELY around their Master’s wishes relative to affairs of His household.*

It mattered LITTLE what the stewards of the household thought about their Master’s wishes, or how they thought that the household business should be carried out. The SOLE criteria were the instructions left by the Householder prior to His departure.

This parable pertains to things occurring during *the entire time of the Lord’s absence*. It is thus a simple matter to understand that Israel CANNOT be in view, for Israel has been set aside and will remain set aside for the entire present dispensation (which will last 2,000 years, two millenniums). It is during this time that the stewardship depicted in these parables occurs, and it will be at the end of this time that the Lord will return *to reckon with His servants on the basis of their stewardship during the time of His absence.*

ONLY THEN will God resume His national dealings with Israel.

Further, at this point in Matthew’s gospel, the proffered kingdom (“the kingdom of the heavens” [25:1]) had been taken from Israel, and this aspect of the kingdom is that which is in view throughout the Olivet Discourse parables (*ref. the introduction to this book*).

The kingdom of the heavens had been taken from Israel with a view to *a new nation* being called into existence to bring forth “the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43); and the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse was given anticipating this new nation’s existence.

(Note that Christ gave the parable in Luke 19:11-27 immediately before His announcement concerning the removal of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel [Luke 20:9-18; *cf.* Matt. 21:33-44]. This section would thus have to be looked upon as anticipating both the removal of the kingdom from Israel and the calling into existence of the new nation to be the recipient of this offer.)

There can be *NO question whatsoever* concerning the identity of *the new nation* to which the kingdom of the heavens was to be offered and from which Christ would gather fruit relating to the kingdom. This new nation *can be NEITHER Jewish NOR Gentile* (for the kingdom was taken from Israel, and the Gentile nations are alienated from God, completely outside the scope of spiritual blessings *apart from Israel* [Eph. 2:12]).

ONLY that “holy nation,” the “one new man” *in Christ* (Eph. 2:13-15; I Peter 2:9, 10), *who is NEITHER Jew nor GENTILE* (but still of Abraham’s seed, wherein all spiritual blessings lie [Gal. 3:26-29; cf. Gen. 12:2, 3; 14:19; 22:17, 18]), could be in view.

The “one new man” *in Christ* was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected (the kingdom of the heavens); and, presently, it is this “one new man” *in Christ, ALONE*, who is in possession of heavenly promises and blessings which fit within the framework of the four Olivet Discourse parables, beginning with Matt. 24:40 and extending to Matt. 25:30.

A Change in Stewardship

The announcement by Christ concerning the removal of the kingdom from Israel in Matthew chapter twenty-one was given immediately following the parable of the Householder and His vineyard (vv. 33-41). Jesus had been teaching in the Temple in the presence of the Chief Priests, Elders, Scribes, and Pharisees (cf. Matt. 21:23; Mark 11:27; Luke 20:1); and He, in parabolic form, very briefly outlined the 1,500-year history of Israel as it pertained to the matter at hand.

The “vineyard” is identified in Isa. 5:1-7 as *the house of Israel*, though the nation’s religious leaders used the term in a slightly different sense in response to Christ’s question at the conclusion of the parable. They used the term more in the sense of *the privileges and responsibilities* (connected with fruit-bearing) which belonged to Israel.

The parable begins by calling attention to the planting of a vineyard, which should have drawn the hearers’ attention immediately to Isa. 5:1-7. The vineyard (the house of Israel) was then

let out to “husbandmen” (leaders within the nation), and the One Who had planted the vineyard (God) took leave and “went into a far country [He returned to heaven].”

When sufficient time had elapsed for the vineyard to produce fruit, God sent His “servants” (prophets) to the leaders of Israel “that they might receive the fruits of it.” The leaders of the nation, the husbandmen to whom God had delegated authority (with its responsibility), rather than bringing forth fruit from the vineyard (*for there was NONE*), ill-treated the Lord’s servants. They “beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.” Other servants were sent, and “they did unto them likewise” (cf. Matt. 23:29-35).

Then, last of all God sent His Own “Son” to receive fruit from the vineyard. And when the leaders of Israel saw the Son, rather than seeking to fulfill the responsibility which lay with their delegated authority and bring forth fruit from the vineyard (*again, there was NONE*, for Israel was as Sarah, *barren*), they said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.”

They then “caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him” (Matt. 21:37-39).

This parable not only covers 1,500 years of fruitless Jewish history but it also moves into days immediately ahead when Israel would climax the entire matter by slaying even the Householder’s Son, Who was then present and was to be the last One Whom God would send *prior to removing the kingdom from Israel and announcing the nation’s desolation* (Matt. 21:43; 23:38).

Some from the ranks of the Chief Priests, Elders, Scribes, or Pharisees — not realizing the full meaning and significance of the parable in the light that which was occurring (cf. Matt. 13:13-15) — in response to Christ’s question, then outlined *EXACTLY what was about to occur*:

“When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons” (vv. 40, 41).

Israel had been made the repository for both *earthly* and

heavenly promises and blessings, and at this point in time it was *the heavenly promises and blessings (in connection with fruit-bearing)* which were in view. And, in the words of the religious leaders themselves, husbandmen who had failed in their responsibility to the extent described by Christ in the parable should be dealt with in the most severe manner possible.

These *husbandmen*, in their opinion, should be “destroyed”; and *the vineyard* (term used here in the sense of privileges and responsibilities belonging to Israel, rather than relating to the nation itself) should be “let out” to *other husbandmen*, who would bring forth “fruits” in the proper seasons.

It was then that Christ announced, in complete keeping with *part* of that which the religious leaders themselves had said should be done,

“Therefore say I unto *YOU*, The kingdom of God shall be taken from *YOU*, and given to *a NATION* bringing forth the fruits thereof” (v. 43).

The point of the parable was driven home in *a very personal way*, and the religious leaders in Israel then knew that Christ had been referring to *THEM*. *THEY were the present husbandmen, the descendants of those who had slain the prophets; and they were about to climax the entire matter by slaying God’s Son.*

Even after knowing that Christ had been referring to them in the parable, *the religious leaders in Israel did NOTHING contrary to that which had been outlined.*

There was *NO effort* on their part to fulfill the responsibility which lay with their delegated authority and bring forth fruit in the vineyard (note the fruitless fig tree which Christ had cursed the previous day [Matt. 21:18, 19]), and they acted in complete accord with this fact and that which had previously been revealed in the parable.

They “sought to lay hands on [‘apprehend’]” Christ then and there (vv. 45, 46), and would, only several days later, crucify Him (cf. Matt. 26:3, 4, 59-67; 27:11-26; Acts 2:22, 23; 3:12-15).

1) *A House Left Desolate*

It was later, this same day, after voicing His condemnation

of the Scribes and Pharisees, that Christ announced *the remaining part* of that which Israel's religious leaders stated should be done in Matt. 21:42.

In Matt. 23:1ff, Christ told the religious leaders in Israel:

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate [which would refer to the people, the city of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the land]” (v. 38).

The Scribes and Pharisees *had filled up* “the measure” of their fathers (vv. 31, 32), bringing matters to a climax during their day. They formed a terminal generation of husbandmen, spanning a period of 1,500 years, going all the way back to the days of Moses.

The Scribes and Pharisees sat “in Moses seat” [v. 2], as had their fathers who preceded them throughout the numerous generations of Israeli history. Though the theocracy had long since ceased to exist, the shadow of regality still remained in the divine Law, with the Scribes and Pharisees seen as the keepers and religious teachers of this Law (God's rules and regulations governing His people within the theocracy).

The prophets had been rejected by husbandmen overseeing a fruitless vineyard. Then God, last of all, sent His Son, Who would *NOT ONLY* be rejected *BUT* also be crucified by husbandmen continuing to oversee a fruitless vineyard.

Israel's cup of iniquity at this point *had become full* (cf. Gen. 15:16). “This generation” bore the full brunt of God's judgment upon the nation, with this generation, because of their past actions, now holding an inseparable connection with “all the righteous blood shed upon the earth [going all the way back to the death of Abel]”; and it was “this generation” which resultingly witnessed the beginning of *a desolation which would last for approximately two millenniums*.

Though Israel was left *desolate* (a word which, in the Greek text, means “desert,” “wilderness,” or “wasteland” [a place void of water]) during the time of the generation to which Christ spoke, *the fullness of this desolation awaited a future date*.

It will be during the coming Tribulation that the “abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 11:31; 12:11) will take an already desolated house and bring about a further desolation,

one so completely separated from “the Water of Life” that there is really no parallel in Jewish history:

“...for the overspreading of abominations [that which is impure] he shall make it *desolate*, even unto the consummation [the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, the end of the Tribulation]” (Dan. 9:27b).

This entire matter renders it *unthinkable* that Christ could have been referring to Israel in the four Olivet Discourse parables beginning in Matt. 24:40, as many expositors attempt to teach.

NOT ONLY has Israel been set aside for an entire dispensation, during which time God deals with an entirely separate and distinct segment of mankind (those comprising the “one new man” in Christ), *BUT* Israel will lie desolate for the remainder of the age. And this desolation, reaching its height under Antichrist, will *NOT* be lifted until Christ returns to the earth at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

That part of the Olivet Discourse under discussion pertains to something entirely different, *something utterly impossible for Israel to enter into during either the present time or the Tribulation.*

Stewardship in a house is in view (which is another way of saying that a dispensation is in view [which could *ONLY* be a reference to the present dispensation]). There is a Householder with servants; and these servants prove either faithful or unfaithful as they exercise their responsibilities as stewards of the house under and for the Householder. The time during which these events occur is between Christ’s departure and His return.

Thus, it is a simple matter to see and understand that Israel CANNOT be in view. The house of Israel lies desolate throughout this time.

Stewardship in a house which is NOT Jewish (and it CANNOT be Gentile) MUST, of necessity, be in view.

Then, aside from the preceding, the kingdom of the heavens is in view in these parables (Matt. 25:1), something which, as previously seen, Israel CANNOT enter into at this point in time as well.

2) Stewardship in a New House

The gospel of Matthew leads into the Olivet Discourse parables in such a fashion that their correct application and interpretation should *NOT* be missed by anyone.

There is the offer of the kingdom to Israel, the rejection of this offer, Christ turning from Israel, His announcement concerning the Church being brought into existence, His announcement concerning the kingdom being taken from Israel in view of another "nation" entering into this offer, and His announcement concerning the desolation of the house of Israel.

The Olivet Discourse then forms the capstone to the entire matter. In this discourse, Israel is seen being dealt with by God during the terminal seven years of the nation's desolation (24:4-39); the previously announced Church is seen being dealt with by God as a "household," *the nation in possession of the proffered kingdom during the time that the house of Israel lies desolate* (24:40-25:30); and the Gentiles are seen being dealt with by Christ following His return, dealt with on the basis of their treatment of the Jewish people during the Tribulation (25:31-46).

The announcement to Israel that the kingdom of the heavens was "at hand" began under the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1ff). Though Israel had been the repository for heavenly promises and blessings since the time of the nation's inception (actually, dating back to the time of Abraham, over four hundred years earlier [Gen. 14:19; 22:17, 18; cf. Heb. 11:8-16]), this was the first time in Israeli history that the kingdom had been (or could be) announced as being "at hand."

The Messianic King, for the first time, was present with a bona fide offer of the kingdom; and His taking the reins of government at this time was conditioned on the nation's repentance.

This would involve the religious leaders in Israel, those holding the main positions of delegated authority in the Lord's vineyard, bringing forth "*fruits meet for repentance*" from the vineyard (Matt. 3:7, 8).

Following John's imprisonment, the offer of the kingdom was continued by Christ (Matt. 4:12ff). Later He called out twelve disciples who were commissioned to carry the same kingdom message to Israel (Matt. 10:1ff), then later seventy others to carry the same message (Luke 10:1ff).

This message was attended by signs, wonders, and miracles, which constituted the credentials of the messengers of the gospel

of the kingdom and had to do with two things — *Israel and the kingdom* (Matt. 4:23-25; 8:1ff; 10:8; 11:3-5; cf. Isa. 35:5, 6).

The religious leaders in Israel though, rather than bringing forth “fruits meet for repentance,” did everything in their power to subvert this offer.

The husbandmen placed over the vineyard, as described by Christ, “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against [‘before,’ ‘in the presence of’] men” (Matt. 23:13). *They were NOT going to enter the kingdom, and they did EVERYTHING within their power to prevent the nation itself from entering.*

Their actions within this framework had actually reached an apex at the time Christ healed a demon-possessed man who was both blind and dumb (Matt. 12:22ff). Such was revealed through the attitude of both those within the vineyard and the husbandmen placed over the vineyard as they viewed this miraculous work.

The man who had been blind and dumb “both spake and saw.” And, even though the people were “amazed [the word in the Greek text could also incorporate the thought of ‘confusion’]” at what had occurred, they asked a question which showed that their thoughts were really centered more on *unbelief* than belief.

They asked, “Is not this the son of David?” The particle *meti*, used in this question as it appears in the Greek text, shows both *confusion* and a *negative attitude* toward Christ being thought of or identified as David’s Son. The question actually presents a *middle-of-the-road type thought, but leans more toward the negative than the positive.*

It could be better translated:

“Possibly this is the Son of David, but we really don’t think so [with the underlying thought being one of confusion].”

Such a state of mind exhibited by the Israeli people toward Christ had undoubtedly been brought about by the previous works of the nation’s religious leaders.

The Scribes and Pharisees (both were present [cf. Luke 6:7]), immediately preceding this healing, had held a council against Christ, seeking ways to “destroy him” (v. 14).

Then, following the healing of this man who was both “blind, and dumb,” the Scribes and Pharisees accused Christ of casting out

demons “by Beelzebub the prince of the devils [‘demons’]” (v. 24).

It was here that rejection and unbelief reached an apex, for Christ referred to their actions as “the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,” constituting a sin which would not be forgiven them (and thus the nation at large, for these religious leaders acted on behalf of the people, with the people following their lead) “neither in this world [‘age’], neither in the world [‘age’] to come” (vv. 31, 32).

Such would include both the present dispensation and the coming Messianic Era (the latter is both *an age* and *a dispensation*, though that is not the case with the former). Israel, following this announcement, would bear no fruit relative to the kingdom of the heavens in either dispensation. Thus, for all practical purposes, the kingdom was taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel, though the announcement was not made until a later time.

Immediately after this, on the same day, Christ went out of the house (signifying the house of Israel), went down by the seaside (signifying the Gentiles), and, for the first time in His ministry, began to speak extensively in parables (13:1ff [Christ had used parables sparingly prior to this time]).

The Church then came into view (16:18, 19), and matters following the announcement concerning the Church began to move more toward the crucifixion rather than the crowning of the King (16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; 21:39).

ALL these things led into the cursing of the fruitless fig tree (21:18, 19), the parable concerning the fruitless vineyard (21:33-40), the announcement that the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (21:43), Christ’s condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees (23:1-36), the announcement concerning Israel’s desolation (23:38), and the discourse on the Mt. of Olives (chs. 24, 25).

The stewards of God, for a period of time, *could NO longer be Jewish*. *The house of Israel had been left desolate; and new “stewards,”* associated with “a household” (cf. Matt. 24:45; Luke 12:42; I Cor. 4:1, 2; I Peter 4:10), were brought into existence to be the recipients of that which Israel had rejected. And this stewardship, existing separate from Israel’s stewardship, would last for *one dispensation*.

(The words “steward” and “dispensation” have a common association with *a household* in the New Testament, something quite obvious in the Greek text but often overlooked in the English text.

The Greek word for “house” is *oikos*, and the Greek words translated “steward” and “dispensation” in the New Testament are *oikonomos* and *oikonomia* respectively [e.g., Luke 12:42; Col. 1:25]. *Oikonomos* and *oikonomia* are cognate words, practically indistinguishable in meaning, with both words derived from a combination of *oikos* [“house”] and *nemo* [“to manage”]. Thus, both words simply have to do with *managing a house*.

Oikos, as previously seen, refers to the “house” itself; *oikonomos* [derived through combining *oikos* and *nemo*] refers more specifically to the “steward” [who is the manager of the *oikos*]; and *oikonomia* [derived from the same two words again] refers more specifically to the “management of affairs” by the steward [the *oikonomos*] in the house [the *oikos*].

Accordingly, a “dispensation” is simply *the management of God’s affairs within His household, which He has committed to stewards*.

The word for “dispensation” [*oikonomia*] *does NOT*, as is often thought, refer to a period of time. “Time” is referred to by the Greek word *aion* [“age”]. That is to say, an *oikonomia* [a dispensation] occurs within an *aion* [an age].

Thus, when one refers to “a dispensation,” he is referring to “*events occurring during time*,” *during an age*, NOT to “*time*” itself. And *these events* involve the management of affairs in God’s household by stewards who are not Jewish but rather part of the “one new man” *in Christ*.

[A dispensation may or may not occur throughout time covering an entire age. There are three separate dispensations which occur during the present age (the 6,000 years covering Man’s Day). But the dispensation occurring during the coming age, the Messianic Era, occurs throughout time covering the entire age].

The preceding distinctions are important in order to avoid error in Biblical terminology, which can lead to error in Biblical interpretation.

For example, though the expression, “the Church age,” is widely used throughout Christendom today, *there is NO such thing*. In fact, from a Biblical standpoint, the expression is very misleading.

The present age [having to do with *time*] lasts the entire duration of Man’s Day, for 6,000 years; on the other hand, the present dispensation [having to do with *God’s management of affairs in a household which is not Jewish*] lasts for 2,000 years.

For additional information on this subject refer to Ch. V, "Ages and Dispensations," in the author's book, *The Study of Scripture*.)

Faithful and Unfaithful Stewards

The parable of the Householder and His servant refers to *stewardship in the house during the time of the Lord's absence, with the coming kingdom in view.*

This stewardship involves carrying out the Householder's wishes relative to affairs in the house. *The Householder has spoken, and the stewards are to act accordingly during the time of His absence.*

So far as activities in the house are concerned, *the ONLY thing of ANY moment is that which the Householder has commanded should be carried out by His household stewards during His time of absence.*

The one requirement of stewards is "faithfulness" (I Cor. 4:2). The Householder has left instructions, and every steward in the house is to exercise faithfulness therein, with faithfulness centered in following the instructions left by the Householder prior to His departure.

The parable of the Householder and His servant shows the command given to a steward by the Householder and the end result of both faithfulness and unfaithfulness by the steward to this command. Faithfulness will result in the steward being *rewarded*, and unfaithfulness will result in the steward being *severely chastened*.

Something often overlooked in the parable of the Householder and His servant is the fact that *there is ONLY one servant in view throughout the parable.* This was made clear by the Lord when He gave the same parable on an earlier occasion, as recorded in Luke 12:42-48. He first spoke of *a faithful and wise servant* (vv. 42-44); then He spoke of *the same servant becoming unfaithful* (vv. 45-48):

"And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward [Gk., *oikonomos*], whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.

Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

But and if that servant say in his heart [the same servant, the pre-

viously mentioned steward], my lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers [‘the unfaithful ones’]” (vv. 42-46).

The only difference in the wording of the text in the two accounts is the use of the word “evil” before “servant” in Matthew’s account. In Luke, the text reads, “But and if that servant...” (v. 45); in Matthew, the text reads, “But and if that evil servant...” (v. 48).

The servant in both accounts actually *became an evil servant*, though the word itself is not used in Luke. Comparing the accounts, both should be understood in the sense of:

“But if that steward, becoming an evil steward, shall...,” or “But if that steward should wickedly say...”

The servant thus, in both accounts of the parable, *either exercises faithfulness or he becomes unfaithful*.

In Matt. 24:45-47 and Luke 12:42-44, *the servant remains faithful* to the charge left by the Householder, resulting in his being *rewarded* at the time of the Householder’s return.

In Matt. 24:48-51 and Luke 12:45-48, *the same servant becomes unfaithful* and begins acting in a manner completely contrary to the charge left by the Householder, resulting in his being *severely chastened* at the time of the Householder’s return.

1) Command of the Householder

The Householder’s command to the servant placed over His house was *to give those in the house “meat in due season”* (v. 45). “Meat” in Scripture, as distinguished from “milk,” has a peculiar reference to those things pertaining *to the Lord’s return and the coming kingdom*.

“Meat,” for example, in Heb. 5:11-14 has to do with Christ exercising the Melchizedek priesthood, a ministry as both King and Priest, reserved for the coming age.

In the parable of the Householder and His servant, this is shown *by everything in the parable revolving around the Lord's return, with either reward or chastisement — with the kingdom in view — awaiting the servants.*

The purpose for the entire present dispensation has to do with *the coming kingdom*. The call is presently going forth concerning proffered positions as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age, and the present dispensation covers that period of time when fruit relating to the kingdom will be brought forth by those destined to comprise the co-heirs.

The “meat in due season,” *NOT ONLY* in the light of related Scripture *BUT* in the light of the text itself, would have to consist of those things relating to the Lord's return and the coming kingdom.

The faithful servant, dispensing “meat in due season,” teaches those placed under his care about the Lord's return and proffered positions in the kingdom, in view of extracting fruit for his absent Lord. At the time of the Lord's return, fruit will be in evidence; and *NOT ONLY* will the faithful servant be positioned as “ruler [co-heir with Christ in the kingdom],” *BUT* through his previous ministry in the house others will be brought into this position as well.

Should the servant become unfaithful, the opposite will be true. He *will NOT* teach those placed under his care about the Lord's return and proffered positions in the kingdom. There will be *NO* fruit; and *NOT ONLY* will the unfaithful servant face severe chastisement, *BUT* those placed under his care, failing to bring forth fruit (as a direct result of the unfaithful servant's ministry), will find themselves in similar straits.

The servant in the parable who became unfaithful said in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming.” He then began to “smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken” (vv. 48, 49).

The word translated “smite” in the Greek text refers to *a blow to the body*. This is the word used in Matt. 27:30 and Luke 22:64 where Christ was smitten on the head and face preceding His crucifixion.

The contextual usage of the word in Matt. 24:49 would actually seem to be something similar to what we understand today as a “slap in the face.” The servant's refusal to give meat in due

season would, in this sense, be a slap in the face for those placed under his care (for he, through his actions, completely disregards the reason for his appointed position, which has to do with the spiritual welfare of those whom he is mistreating).

And his eating and drinking with the drunken, contextually (*cf.* vv. 37-39), would refer to his manner of living becoming patterned after that of the world, completely oblivious to matters relating to the Lord's return and the coming kingdom.

2) *Reward, Chastisement by the Householder*

The reward awaiting the faithful servant is to be positioned as "ruler" over all his Lord's goods. Those servants brought into this position are referred to elsewhere in Scripture as "joint-heirs" or "fellowheirs" (same word in the Greek text [*cf.* Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6]).

These are the "many sons" whom Christ is in the process of bringing unto glory (Heb. 2:10) to exercise the rights of primogeniture during the coming age. These will be those bringing forth fruit during the present dispensation, with a view to their constituting the rulers in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age.

Chastisement awaiting the unfaithful servant, on the other hand though, will be an entirely different matter. The text reads that the Lord, upon His return, "shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites ['unbelievers' (*lit.*, 'unfaithful')] in Luke 12:46]" (Matt. 24:51).

The Greek word translated "shall cut [him] asunder" (*dichotomeo*) literally means to *cut in two*, a form of executing criminals in ancient times. The word is used in a metaphorical sense to describe *punishment of a severe nature*.

It is NO small thing to disregard the clear instructions left by the Householder at the time of His departure, for, when He returns, household servants are going to be dealt with on the basis of their actions relative to these provided instructions.

And reward or chastisement will be EXACTLY commensurate with the household servants' faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the matter.

3

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

ALL Had Oil in Their Lamps, BUT...

“Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (Matt. 25:1-4).

Teachings from the opening two parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40-51) are continued in the third parable, the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13). And this third parable, in keeping with the nature of parables, has been given to provide additional light for and help to explain the two preceding parables.

(In this third parable, the parable of the ten virgins, “the Householder” [drawing from and providing more information for the previous two parables] is seen as *the Bridegroom*, and “the household servants” [again, drawing from and providing more information for the previous two parables] are seen as *ten virgins*.

The reason for this change is easy to understand. *Wedding festivities and a marriage* are in view in the parable of the ten virgins. And this is something not seen in the other three parables, though something necessary to complete the composite picture presented by all four parables viewed together.)

The word, “Then,” beginning the parable of the ten virgins is the translation of a correlative adverb from the Greek text. This word forms *a connection with both of the parables which preceded*.

All three parables have to do with *the SAME thing*. As seen in the previous two chapters of this book, *time, conditions, circumstances, and the individuals involved are the SAME throughout*.

In each of these three parables (and the same will be seen in the fourth parable, the parable of the talents [25:14-30]), two types of Christians are in view — *faithful*, and *unfaithful* — with each parable presenting a different facet of *EXACTLY the same thing*.

Each parable presents *the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of household servants during the present time, with a view to the acceptance or rejection of these household servants as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom during future time. And an emphasis is placed on the latter throughout the parables — the ultimate results of faithfulness or unfaithfulness*.

The five wise virgins represent the same segment of Christendom as *the faithful servant in the Lord's house* (24:45-47), synonymous with *the ones received alongside as companions with their Lord in the kingdom* (24:40, 41).

The five foolish virgins, on the other hand, represent the same segment of Christendom as *the unfaithful servant in the Lord's house* (the servant who became unfaithful [24:48-51]), synonymous with *the ones turned away, rejected by their Lord* (turned away from, rejected for positions as companions with Christ in the kingdom [24:40, 41]).

Further light is then given to help explain the entire matter in the parable of the talents which follows the parable of the ten virgins, closing the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. The opening verse of this parable (v. 14) clearly explains that the parable about to follow is *just like* the parable which has preceded:

“For it [the parable of the ten virgins] is *just as* a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods [literal translation from the Greek text].”

And, since the parable of the ten virgins deals with the same thing as the two previous parables in chapter twenty-four, teachings in the parable of the talents which follows the parable of the ten virgins *MUST NOT ONLY* reflect upon the parable of the ten virgins *BUT* upon the first two parables as well.

The parable of the ten virgins *MUST* be understood in the light of its context. *ONLY* by so doing can the Christian avoid being

led astray by erroneous exposition and arrive at *the ONLY correct interpretation and understanding of the parable.*

The Kingdom of the Heavens

The expression, “the kingdom of the heavens,” the announced subject at hand in the opening verse of the parable of the ten virgins, is *the rule of the heavens over the earth*. The source of all rule on the earth can be traced to *a heavenly sphere* — first, to the heavens above the earth; then, to the heavens beyond the earth in the far reaches of the North, where God dwells.

“...the heavens do rule” (Dan. 4:26).

God rules over His entire creation as *the One Supreme Ruler*, and He has appointed regents and vice-regents throughout His creation to whom He has delegated power and authority (Ps. 103:19; Dan. 4:17, 25; Eph. 6:10-18).

Presently, angels rule directly under God throughout the material universe, including the earth upon which man resides (*cf.* Job 1:6; 2:1; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:14). Insofar as the earth is concerned, Satan and his angels rule from *a heavenly sphere under God through men upon the earth* (a rebellious-type rule by Satan and his angels, though a rule under God nonetheless).

This is a type rule in the universe peculiar to this earth, for the existence of man is a matter itself peculiar to this earth. Man was created to replace the disqualified incumbent ruler and those ruling with him, *a matter delayed for six millenniums but about to be realized.*

Man was created, not superior to, but “a little lower than the angels,” a position which Christ Himself occupied while on earth (Heb. 2:7, 9). The text and context in Hebrews chapter two have to do with *a rule over the earth* (vv. 5-10; *cf.* Ps. 8:3-8). That is, man did not hold the sceptre at the time of his creation. He was created in a position to assume the sceptre; and, created in this position (not yet holding the sceptre), he, relative to rulership over the earth, would have to be looked upon as created “a little lower than the angels.”

The description, “a little lower than the angels,” thus has to do with *man’s position at the time of his creation, before the entrance of sin.*

The entrance of sin only kept man in this position, *for fallen man was then in NO position or condition to hold the sceptre*. And man's present position and condition *will remain the SAME as it presently exists UNTIL redemption is complete, UNTIL man has been redeemed body, soul, and spirit*.

Man's position both preceding and following the fall is the reason that the Redeemer Himself, "made in the likeness of [fallen] men," was also "made a little lower than the angels" (Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:9).

Christ assumed the position which fallen man occupied (relative to being *estranged from the sceptre, NOT in connection with sin*). He assumed this position "for the suffering of death" — to effect redemption, ultimately resulting in man being removed from his present position and realizing the purpose for his creation in the beginning.

(The preceding presents in very succinct form *the complete story of redemption*. That which was lost through the first man's fall, the first Adam's fall [which had to do first and foremost with *regality*], will be regained through the second Man's redemptive work, the Last Adam's redemptive work [which, of necessity, *can ONLY have to do first and foremost with regality as well*].

Man has been saved for *a purpose*, which can be understood *ONLY in the light of the purpose for his creation and the reason why Satan brought about his fall, seen in the opening three chapter of Genesis*. And to deal with redemption apart from that revealed in these opening three chapters is to deal with the subject apart from the established foundations.

And, WITHOUT question, the SUREST and QUICKEST way possible to get into trouble in Biblical interpretation is to IGNORE the foundations set forth in Genesis.)

When Satan offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" if He would but "fall down and worship" him (Matt. 4:8, 9), the positions which both occupied *MUST be understood*.

"Satan," an angelic being, was *the incumbent ruler*. The power to exercise authority within these kingdoms had been "delivered" *unto him* (Luke 4:5, 6), and he was offering this power to an individual Who had been "made in the likeness of [fallen] men," "a little lower than the angels."

Satan thus assessed the situation correctly. The One destined to replace him could, *at that time, ONLY have occupied a position under him.*

Man ruling today (for Christians, it would be ruling “before the time” [cf. I Cor. 4:5]) *can ONLY find himself in a position of power under angels* (under Satan and lesser angels ruling with him from the heavens). Man, though created to take the sceptre, should he seek to exercise regal power today, *can rise NO higher than occupying a subordinate position to the incumbent ruler, within his kingdom*; and this is *the ONLY position* in which man, exercising regal power today, can find himself throughout the remainder of the present dispensation.

There is *ONLY one kingdom of the heavens* in relation to the earth — the one under the control of Satan and his angels.

Israel, in view of man moving in and possessing power and authority from the heavens (in the stead of angels), was made the repository of this kingdom during Old Testament days (both heavenly and earthly [Gen. 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:12-14]). The way was opened at Christ’s first coming for Israel to move in and possess the heavenly realm, *but the offer was spurned*; and *today these heavenly positions of power and authority are being offered to Christians.*

Man moving into heavenly positions of power within this kingdom though will necessitate a complete change of *ALL* powers and authorities, which is *EXACTLY* what will occur.

Satan and his angels, though disqualified and rejected, will continue to rule *UNTIL* that time, for a principle of Biblical government necessitates that *an incumbent hold office UNTIL he is actually replaced.*

At the time of Christ’s return, Satan and his angels will be put down, and *Christ with His co-heirs will THEN move in and take over the government:*

“For unto the angels hath he *not* put in subjection the world [‘inhabited world’] to come...” (Heb. 2:5).

Matt. 25:1ff views the kingdom of the heavens in both the light of the Christians’ *present calling relative to the kingdom* and in the light of the Christians’ *future position in the kingdom.*

And since this kingdom is the one previously taken from Israel and presently being offered to Christians (*cf.* Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10), the teaching promulgated by many concerning the ten virgins representing Israel is *completely untenable*.

Such a teaching is *NOT ONLY* erroneous *BUT* quite misleading, for it completely obscures the issue at hand. *Christians* are the ones presently in possession of the “heavenly calling” relating to “his kingdom and glory” (following Matt. 21:43), *NOT Israelites* (I Thess. 2:12; Heb. 3:1; I Peter 5:1, 10; II Peter 1:3); *and the parable of the ten virgins pertains to the present heirs and future possessors of the kingdom of the heavens* (to “children” who are presently heirs, and to “sons” following the adoption and realization of the inheritance [Rom. 8:14-23]).

Ten Virgins with Lamps

“Ten” is the number of *ordinal completion*, signifying *ALL* of the *virgins*, *ALL* those to whom the kingdom is presently being offered, *ALL Christians*. It is the same as in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12ff. The Lord, prior to His departure, “called his ten servants, and delivered unto them ten pounds...” (v. 13). That is, prior to His departure, he called *ALL of His servants and delivered unto them ALL of His business*. And this referred to activity within a succeeding dispensation *which CANNOT be Jewish* (*ref.* Ch. II in this book).

ALL ten virgins “took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” This refers to activity among servants of the Lord during the present dispensation (using the ten pounds, carrying on the Lord’s business), with provided light to carry out this activity.

The Bridegroom, the “light of the world” (John 8:12), is absent. The “rulers of the darkness of this world” are presently in control of affairs (Eph. 6:12); but Christians have been *called* “out of darkness [out of the things associated with this ‘present world’ and the incumbent rulers] into his marvellous light [into the things associated with the ‘world to come’ and its new order of rulers]” (I Peter 2:9).

The Word of God is “a lamp” unto *our feet* and “a light” unto *our path* (Ps. 119:105), as the indwelling Holy Spirit takes this Word and *guides* us “into all truth” (John 16:13). As the Christian

receives “the engrafted word [that which is completely compatible with and natural for his new nature]” into his saved human spirit (James 1:21), the indwelling Holy Spirit takes this Word and opens it to his spiritual understanding. *Light* then shines forth “out of darkness” (II Cor. 4:6; cf. vv. 3-5), providing that which is necessary for Christians to possess during the time of this world’s darkness.

Each virgin among the ten had their own lamp. None was excluded from the provided light. Just as each servant in Luke 19:12ff was entrusted with a portion of the Lord’s business during His time of absence, each one of the virgins in Matt. 25:1ff (synonymous with the ten servants in Luke 19:12ff) had been provided with light to carry out this activity.

Provided light for the present day *MUST always* find its association with light spoken of in connection with that coming day, the millennial day (cf. Matt. 16:28-17:5). The Christians’ calling has to do with that coming day, and the Christians’ present commission and provision within his calling (the Lord’s business, light) would also have to do with this same period.

The ten virgins taking their lamps and going forth to meet the Bridegroom reveals far more than just present activity carried out in presently provided light. The picture is *present activity being carried out in presently provided light in view of a future meeting with the Bridegroom and events beyond*.

Ten Virgins Going Forth

The ten virgins were traveling in a definite direction which would lead to a revealed engagement — *a meeting with the Bridegroom*. Several manuscripts add the words, “and the bride,” to the end of verse one, making the verse read, “...the bridegroom and the bride.” This is without question either a scribal interpolation based on erroneous exposition or a scribal error introduced inadvertently through copying from one manuscript to another.

The addition of these words would change the whole structure of the parable into something completely out of line with *NOT ONLY* its context (the two parables preceding and the one parable following) *BUT* its own internal teaching.

Some expositors (not all) seeking support for their claim that the ten virgins represent Israel awaiting the return of Christ to the earth at the end of the Tribulation call attention to this reading, “and the bride” (found in the Syriac and Vulgate versions), at the end of verse one. In this respect, calling attention to and contending for the inclusion of these words results mainly from an attempt to support a previous understanding of the passage, which can easily be shown to be incorrect; and such an attempt only compounds the error already made.

Scripture plainly reveals that the bride of Christ *will NOT return to the earth with Christ at the end of the Tribulation*, though a translation and exposition such as that seen in the Syriac and Vulgate versions would teach that Christ’s bride will be with Him at this time.

But, as will be shown, *that will NOT, it CANNOT, be the case at all*. Rather, Christ will be accompanied by “his mighty angels,” when He returns to deal with Israel and the Gentile nations, *NOT* by His bride (I Thess. 1:7; cf. Rev. 19:14).

Moses did not take Zipporah with him when he returned to Egypt (a type of the world) and appeared a second time to his brethren. Zipporah traveled only part of the way. Moses traveled the remainder of the way without her, and *they were reunited ONLY after he had dealt with his brethren, had dealt with the Egyptians, and had led the Israelites out of Egypt* (Ex. 4:19-26; 18:1-5).

Thus will it be when Christ returns to this earth and appears to His brethren a second time, deals with them, deals with the Gentiles, and leads the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion. His bride *will NOT* accompany Him all the way back to the earth. Christ’s bride will (within the structure of the type) travel only part way, probably remain in the new Jerusalem above the earth, and be reunited with Christ *ONLY AFTER the completion of certain events surrounding His return to the earth with His angels*.

Note also in a previous type that Asenath was *NOT* with Joseph when he dealt with and made himself known to his brethren (Gen. 44:1-45:15). She was in another part of the palace.

Another problem which has been introduced into the passage is an attempt to see the rapture in this same verse, in verse one (which is *an eisegesis* of the passage [a reading into the passage

that which is not really in the passage] rather than *an exegesis* of the passage [a reading out of the passage that which is in the passage, letting the passage interpret itself]).

The ten virgins *going forth to meet the Bridegroom* in verse one *should NOT* be understood as a reference to the return of Christ for the Church (*i.e.*, the rapture). *NOR* should the similar statement in verse six. Christ's return and events following His return are referred to in verses ten through twelve (though not the rapture *per se*; it is the Nobleman's return to deal with His household servants [note the preceding two parables *in this SAME respect*]).

Scripture preceding verses ten through twelve refers to Christian activity during the present dispensation in view of Christ's return and attendant events at the end of the dispensation.

Statements referring to the ten virgins going "forth to meet the bridegroom," or the "midnight" cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (vv. 1, 6), *MUST be understood in the light of the context, which involves the Christians' calling, their present responsibility, and their future accountability.*

The focal point is on *an impending meeting with the Bridegroom (ALL ten virgins present, ALL Christians present), preparing for that time, and judgment to be meted out by and in the presence of the Bridegroom.*

That's what is in view by the reference to "midnight [which has to do with *judgment*]" and the statement, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." In other words, the Bridegroom is going to return, with judgment following His return.

And, in view of the Christians' calling, the admonition is clear: *"Be prepared, be ready, for His return!"*

(The first mention of "midnight" in Scripture is in Ex. 11:4, in a passage which connects "midnight" with *the time of God's judgment — the death of the firstborn.*

A first-mention principle concerning "midnight" has been established at this point in Scripture. And any subsequent use of "midnight" would, of necessity, have to be understood in the light of its first usage in Exodus [*e.g.*, note in Ruth 3:8 that Ruth appeared in Boaz's presence, on his threshing floor, at "midnight," with "the threshing floor" as well foreshadowing *the time of God's judgment — the future judgment of Christians on Christ's threshing floor (cf. Matt. 3:11, 12), at His judgment seat*].)

Five Wise and Five Foolish

There is a sharp distinction in the Greek text between the words translated “wise” (*phronimos*) and “foolish” (*moros*). These words are opposites. One has to do with a person who is “prudent, sensible, thoughtful [one who thinks, uses his mentality].” The other has to do with a person who is “stupid, senseless [one who doesn’t think, doesn’t use his mentality].”

The same two words are used in Matt. 7:24, 26 relative to individuals either building on the rock or on the sand. *One gives thought to that which he is doing, in view of the future; the other does not.*

The word *moros*, translated “foolish,” is actually the Greek word from which our English word “moron” is derived. “Moron” is simply a transliterated, an Anglicized, form of *moros*. And the sharp distinction between the wise and the foolish, along with the true nature of the foolish, can be seen by substituting the word “moron” for “foolish” in the text. That is, “...five of them were wise, and five were morons.”

A *moron* is a “sluggish, very foolish, or stupid person.” He normally exhibits a mentality allowing him to do “routine work under supervision,” and most morons can be quite “happy with tasks too simple and monotonous to satisfy an intelligent person.”

Scripture uses the word *moros* to describe a person whose actions are governed by spiritual intelligence of a very low nature, especially relating to matters surrounding the Lord’s return and the coming kingdom.

And the parallel between the wise and foolish virgins in Matt. 25:1ff and wise and foolish Christians in the world today, for those who have eyes to see, is quite obvious. In fact, the matter is so obvious that only a *moros*, “a moron,” could possibly miss it.

There are Christians who study, give thought to, and understand things relative to the appearance of the Bridegroom and the coming kingdom. The vast majority of Christians though do not concern themselves with these things.

Those in one segment, the wise, search out things in the Word pertaining to the soon-coming meeting with the Bridegroom and the kingdom which follows. They have a respect for “the recom-

pense of the reward" (cf. Heb. 11:23-26).

Those in the other segment though are not interested in these things. They are often very happy in totally unrelated tasks [usually Church work, so called, within the sphere of man's goals, aims, ambitions, and aspirations] *which are NOT ONLY too simple and monotonous to satisfy a spiritually intelligent person BUT not really in line with the direction toward which all Scripture moves.*

These are the ones described by the Greek word *moros*.

Christians are in possession of *the highest of ALL callings, a calling to occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in a heavenly sphere during the coming age*; and, in view of this, only "a very foolish or stupid person," *a moros*, "a moron," would exhibit the type spiritual mentality prevalent throughout much of Christendom today, a mentality which ignores the Lord's return and the coming kingdom.

Oil in the Lamps

ALL of the virgins went forth with lamps to meet the Bridegroom, and *ALL* of the lamps were burning. Each lamp had a supply of oil. The difference between the wise and the foolish lay in the fact that *the wise took along an extra supply of oil.*

The wise took along a supply sufficient *to provide light for safe travel throughout the time of this world's darkness, which would prevail while they awaited the Bridegroom.*

The foolish though, without this extra supply of oil, without this provision of light, *were in NO condition to travel safely through the time of this world's darkness.*

"Oil" and "no oil" in verses three and four refer to *the extra supply* carried in a separate container and used to replenish the supply which the wick touched and from which the wick drew. This is evident by comparing these two verses with verses seven and eight:

"Then all those virgins [all ten] arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil [from the extra supply]; for our lamps are gone out [*lit., 'are going out'*]."

The supply of oil in the reservoirs touching the wicks was being exhausted in all the lamps, *BUT* the wise carried an extra

supply of oil to refill the reservoirs, keeping their lamps burning.

The foolish though, without this extra supply of oil, *could NOT* keep their lamps burning. Their lamps began going out, and they were helpless to do anything about the matter.

1) *Symbolism and Use of Oil in the Old Testament*

“Oil” was used in the Old Testament Scriptures 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 duties in the office to which he was being consecrated.

Saul, for example, was anointed the first king over Israel (I Sam. 10:1, 6), and David was later anointed king in Saul’s stead (I Sam. 16:13). The Spirit of the Lord came upon both Saul and David in connection with their being anointed, empowering both to perform their duties as kings over Israel within the theocracy (see also Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:14-19).

The common experience peculiar to all who were empowered by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was *the Spirit coming upon rather than indwelling them*. The Holy Spirit came upon and empowered individuals for service, but there was the ever-present danger that through disobedience the Holy Spirit would be removed.

This occurred in Saul’s life because of his disobedience (I Sam. 15:1-26; 16:13, 14), and this is what David feared following not only his sin with Bathsheba but his subsequently having her husband slain when he prayed, “...take not thy Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11).

Another connection between anointing with oil and the reception of the Holy Spirit for service can be seen in the fact that “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” at the time Samuel “took the horn of oil” and *anointed David* (I Sam. 16:13, 14).

The Spirit of the Lord came upon David to empower him for tasks as king over Israel; and the Spirit of the Lord left Saul, the rejected king. Even though David had not yet assumed the position as king, and would not for quite some time, Saul *NO longer* possessed the power to properly carry out his duties as king over Israel.

The story of Elijah and Elisha presents a slightly different facet of anointing for service in the Old Testament. The Spirit of God

empowered Elijah for service as a prophet, and *the mantle* which he wore constituted the outward visible sign of his office and the fact that the Spirit of the Lord rested on and empowered him to carry out his duties (II Kings 2:13, 15).

Elijah though did not finish his ministry. Before the conclusion of his ministry, Elijah requested of the Lord “that he might die” (I Kings 19:4). Elijah, in one sense of the word, turned in his resignation; and the Lord accepted it.

Elisha was then anointed prophet in his stead and finished his ministry, following Elijah’s removal from the earth in a whirlwind (I Kings 19:16; II Kings 2:1-13).

Things were slightly different with Elisha though. Elisha had requested a double portion of the Spirit which rested on Elijah (II Kings 2:10-12). His request was honored; and, with this double portion, Elisha, donning Elijah’s mantle and completing his ministry, *performed twice as many miracles [signs] as Elijah had performed.*

2) The New Testament Experience

Conditions pertaining to the reception of the Holy Spirit during the present dispensation *are NOT* the same as those pertaining to the reception of the Holy Spirit during the past dispensation. During Old Testament days *the Holy Spirit came upon individuals*; but today, rather than coming upon individuals, *the Spirit indwells and fills them.*

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs at the time an individual believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, at the point of salvation (Eph. 1:13, 14; I Cor. 3:16).

Individuals being *filled with the Spirit* though is a different matter entirely. Christians, those *indwelt by the Spirit*, are commanded to “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Eph. 5:18). This is a separate work of the Spirit *following* His initial work at the point of salvation.

The experience of Christians relative to the Holy Spirit during the present dispensation is in perfect keeping with the parable of the ten virgins. *ALL* ten had lamps with oil, *BUT ONLY* five possessed an extra supply of oil. That is to say, *ALL* Christians are in possession of the Holy Spirit, *BUT ONLY* some are filled with the Holy Spirit. *ONLY* some have the extra portion of oil, as in the parable.

Note in this parable that the extra supply of oil appears in connection with the lamps continuing to burn, providing light during the time of darkness.

And the same parallel can be seen in Christendom today.

There is an inseparable connection between being filled with the Spirit and dwelling deeply in the Word of God, the “lamp” unto our feet and “light” unto our path.

Ephesians and Colossians are companion epistles and parallel one another in a number of places. One parallel can be seen by comparing Eph. 5:18-20 with Col. 3:16, 17.

In Ephesians, Christians are told:

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In Colossians, Christians are told:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Note the contextual parallel between the command, “Be filled with the Spirit,” in Ephesians and the command, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” in Colossians. One is substituted for the other in each book, with each statement saying the same thing, though stated in different words.

The two verses, understood together, present a clear Biblical teaching relative to the Word and the Spirit Who gave this Word (breathed this Word through about forty different individuals over a period of some 1,500 years). A Christian who is filled with the Spirit is one who has allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in him “richly in all wisdom.” Or, the inverse of that is saying *EXACTLY* the same

thing: A Christian who has allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in him “richly in all wisdom” is one who is filled with the Spirit.

Such a Christian has studied, prayed over, assimilated the Word; and, at the same time, he has, through this process, progressively allowed himself to become filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the Word, which is *God-Breathed* (II Tim. 3:16) and is *inseparably connected with the entire triune Godhead* (John 1:1, 2).

A Christian filled with the Spirit is filled with the Word. He knows the Word, and he possesses the indwelling Holy Spirit to take this Word and lead him into all truth. He is guided, directed after this fashion; and it is this Word, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, which is a “lamp,” providing “light.” It is this Word, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, which has been given *to guide him through the time of this world’s darkness.*

A Christian NOT filled with the Spirit though finds himself in a completely different position. *He is NOT filled with the Word. He DOESN’T know the Word.* And even though the Spirit indwells the Christian, the Spirit *CANNOT* take the Word (that which the person has little to no knowledge of) and lead that person by means of the Word.

As evident, such is simply NOT possible.

A Christian estranged from the Word is estranged from the “lamp,” the “light” which God has provided; and, apart from this Light, a Christian *CANNOT* travel safely through the time of this world’s darkness.

Such a person will invariably find himself in the position described in Eph. 4:14:

“...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

Such a Christian will be ripe for deception. Should he seek that which is spiritual, he *will NOT* know enough about the Word to avoid being caught up in pseudo-spirituality — something rampant throughout Christendom today, resulting in spiritual shipwreck in the lives of untold millions of Christians.

And that is where Christendom finds itself near the end of the present dispensation, which is *EXACTLY* how Scripture states that

the dispensation would end (*cf.* Luke 18:8; II Tim. 4:1ff; II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 1ff).

Christendom finds itself at a time when the mustard bush has grown into something which it wasn't supposed to grow into at all — “a tree [which, in Scripture, represents a national power]” — with “the birds of the air [the emissaries of Satan]” *finding acceptance and lodging in “the branches” of the tree*; and, consequently, it is a time when the “leaven” which the woman placed in the “three measures of meal” very early in the dispensation is doing its most damaging work of the entire dispensation (Matt. 13:4, 19, 31-33).

(Note that things taught by comparing the filling of the Spirit in Eph. 5:18-20 and Col. 3:16, 17 with *the filling of the Spirit* as seen in both the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts, would seemingly sound either contradictory or leave one with the thought that there is more than one way for Christians to be *filled with the Spirit* today.

But neither is the case. There can be NO contradictions in Scripture; NOR, in the light of clear Scriptural teaching on the subject, can there be more than one way for Christians to presently be *filled with the Spirit*.

John the Baptist's parents, Elizabeth and Zacharias, were both *filled with the Spirit* before their son's birth. Then, John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, was *filled with the Spirit* “from his mother's womb” [Luke 1:15, 41, 67]. And Jesus is seen being *filled with and led by the Spirit* [Luke 4:1; *cf.* Matt. 12:24-32].

In the first thirteen chapters of the Book of Acts, individuals were *filled with the Spirit* after a similar fashion — those proclaiming the message to Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:4; Peter speaking to the religious leaders in Jerusalem in Acts 4:8; an assembly of believers after prayer in Acts 4:31; a search for seven particular men in Acts 6:3; Stephen at the time of his death in Acts 7:55; Paul at the time of his conversion in Acts 9:17; Barnabas at the time he was sent forth in Acts 11:24; and Paul at a subsequent time in his ministry in Acts 13:9.

The preceding verses from the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts [which Luke also wrote], along with Paul's statement in Eph. 5:18, are the only places in the entire New Testament where direct statements are made relative to individuals being *filled with the Spirit* [though *letting the Word dwell in one richly in all wisdom* is a synonymous statement].

But there are *inseparably related statements* such as being “filled with all the fulness of God” [Eph. 3:19], “being filled with the fruits of

righteousness" [Phil. 1:11], being "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" [Col. 1:9], or being "filled with joy" [II Tim. 1:4; I John 1:4; II John 12]. And the preceding would have to be viewed as *inseparably related to Eph. 5:18* ["be filled with the Spirit"] simply because *none of the things stated could be true apart from the filling of the Spirit, the reception of the Word, into one's saved human spirit.*

Note that one section of Scripture having to do with the filling of the Spirit [from Luke's writings in both his gospel and the Book of Acts] presents the matter *as an instantaneous event, apart from the reception of the Word.* BUT the other section of Scripture having to do with the filling of the Spirit [from the New Testament epistles] presents the matter in a completely different respect — *in a progressive manner, in connection with the reception of the Word.*

The difference lies in two related realms:

- 1) The use of different words in the Greek text for "filled."
- 2) The times and circumstances surrounding these fillings.

The different Greek words are *pletho* [or *pimplemi*, same word in another form; or a cognate word (carrying the same meaning), *pleres*] and *pleroo*. *Pletho* and *pleres* are the words used by Luke in his gospel and the Book of Acts; and *pleroo* is the word used by Paul in Eph. 5:18 or in the other inseparably related passages in the epistles.

And, for all practical purposes, there is really no difference between the meaning of these words. All three words mean "to fill"; and all three are used relative to individuals being filled with the Spirit, with individuals being filled with something such as anger or indignation, and with inanimate objects being filled with something such as the sponge with vinegar at the time of Christ's crucifixion.

The *TIME* in which the different words were used and *HOW* they were used is where the difference lies. *Pletho* and *pleres* were used by Luke in his gospel and the Book of Acts *during the time of and in connection with both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel.* The last use in the New Testament of both *pletho* and *pleres* relative to individuals being filled with the Spirit is in Acts 11:24 and 13:9. Actually, neither word is used outside the gospels and the Book of Acts except one usage of *pleres* in II John 8, where it is used relative to Christians receiving "a full reward."

Pleroo, on the other hand, used by Paul in Ephesians, was used *relative to Christians separate from the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel.*

In the preceding respect, it would be completely out of place to use

either *pletho* or *pleres* relative to Christians being filled with the Spirit today. The type filling of the Spirit in view through the use of these two words was reserved for a particular time and particular circumstances.

The proper word to use in relation to Christians being filled with the Spirit today is *pleroo*, and the only proper way to view the matter is *EXACTLY* as seen in Ephesians and Colossians, *NOT* as seen through the manner in which the filling of the Spirit is depicted through the use of *pletho* and *pleres* in the gospels and the Book of Acts [*ref.* the author's book, *The Acts Period*, Ch. VIII, pp. 103, 105].)

Concluding Remarks:

Scripture places an emphasis in two realms:

1) Christians knowing and understanding things pertaining to the return of the Bridegroom and the kingdom which follows.

2) Christians making proper preparation during the present day for that future day.

We have been saved for a purpose, and *that purpose has to do with the coming kingdom*. We have been called "unto his kingdom and glory," and we are admonished to "walk worthy" of this *high calling* (I Thess. 2:12; cf. Phil. 3:14).

Wise Christians live in the light of the Bridegroom's return. They conduct their lives during the present time in the light of that future day, anticipating the fulfillment of His promise,

"And if I go away...*I will come again...*" (John 14:3).

The unwise, the foolish, the moros, though conduct their lives in an opposite manner during the present time. They live in the light of that which can be seen by the natural man (cf. Heb. 11:1), the here and now, giving little to no thought pertaining to the Bridegroom's return.

And, in such an hour as they think not, the Bridegroom will return (cf. Matt. 24:44, 50).

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith..." (Heb. 10:37-38a).

4

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Christ's Judgment Seat and Beyond

"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him (Matt". 25:5, 6).

The parable of the ten virgins begins with *ALL of the virgins possessing lamps with oil, five burning and five going out, as they go forth to meet the Bridegroom* (Matt. 25:1ff); and, in verse six, *this meeting is seen to occur at midnight*.

The complete parable has to do with one central, continuous thought — *preparation for meeting the Bridegroom, along with that which occurs once the meeting with the Bridegroom takes place*.

The progression of events, beginning with verse one and continuing to the end of the parable in verse thirteen, is interrupted by that seen in verses five through nine. These five verses drop back and provide details concerning the activity of the ten virgins during the time of the Bridegroom's absence, preceding His return.

That seen in verses five through nine, the activity of the ten virgins (the household servants) during the time of the Bridegroom's absence (the Householder's absence), is the same thing seen through the course of several verses in the other three parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40, 41, 45b, 46, 48, 49; 25:14-18).

The activity of household servants is expressed different ways in each of the four parables, as is their inevitable meeting with the Householder to render an account, along with that which occurs following the accounting.

The matter of the activity of household servants during the present dispensation in the parable which immediately precedes the parable of the ten virgins and the one which immediately follows has to do with the proper or improper use of that which had been entrusted to them by the Householder.

And, *IF* that entrusted to them was used in a *PROPER* manner, it would have to be done in complete keeping with the instructions which the Householder had given to them prior to His departure.

But in the parable of the ten virgins, the matter is introduced in a different manner — “...they all [*ALL ten virgins*, both the wise and the foolish] slumbered and slept” (v. 5).

THEN, immediately following and inseparably connected is a statement concerning *the midnight cry* (v. 6), which pertains to the Bridegroom’s return and the inevitable meeting of all household servants with the Bridegroom at the time of His return.

Time, Purpose of the Midnight Cry

The parable of the ten virgins begins at a time *AFTER* the dispensation has run its course, with *ALL ten virgins* (both “the wise” and “the foolish”) going forth to meet the Bridegroom, to give an account of their activities in the house during His time of absence (vv. 1-4).

Then five verses in the parable present a backdrop (vv. 5-9), describing the previous activity of all ten virgins (both “the wise” and “the foolish”) during the dispensation which will, at this point in time, be over.

Then verse ten picks up where verse four had left off and *relates that which occurs when ALL ten virgins appear before the Bridegroom*.

The statement in verse five, *ALL ten virgins slumbering and sleeping* (introducing the backdrop), has puzzled more than one Bible student. The thing which bothers people is how the five wise virgins *could have slept during the dispensation and still be seen as faithful at the time of the midnight cry* (actually, as will be seen, the five wise virgins are the ones echoing this cry during the dispensation).

A statement of this nature (sleeping) would normally be Scripture’s way of saying that *all ten virgins (both the wise and the foolish) ceased to look for the Bridegroom’s return*. And the five wise virgins

falling asleep with the five foolish virgins would, of course, have shown *unfaithfulness on the part of ALL ten* (e.g., I Thess. 5:4-9).

But, according to Scripture, both preceding and following, *this is seen to NOT be the case at all*. In the light of the context — *faithfulness* rather than *unfaithfulness* of the five wise virgins is seen throughout the parable. Thus, this *CAN'T* possibly be the correct way to view and understand this part of the parable.

(Verse five covers the activity of *ALL ten virgins* during the time “while the bridegroom tarried.” The word “tarried” is a translation of the Greek word *chronizo*, the verb form of the Greek noun, *chronos* [having to do with “time”], which is used as a prefix to form numerous English words. The reference in verse five, through the use of this word, is to *the time while the Bridegroom is absent, a time covering the entire dispensation.*)

In the first parable in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse there is a reference to normal activity of household servants during the dispensation — *two men in the field, two women grinding at the mill* — with some later judged as having been faithful, others unfaithful. The reference in Matt. 25:5, “they all [*ALL ten virgins*] slumbered and slept,” is evidently a similar statement; and since *nighttime* is involved, there would be a particular emphasis on *the time of this world’s darkness* which all ten virgins were passing through.

Then, when verses five through nine are viewed together, within context, the whole of the parable can be seen to be perfectly in line with all three of the other parables, where the activity of household servants in the house is described. Attention in verse five is called to servants in the house passing through the time of this world’s darkness. And, it is during the time of this world’s darkness that the midnight cry rings out in the next verse, with the subsequent three verses (vv. 7-9) describing the attitude and actions of all ten virgins relative to the midnight cry.

The “midnight cry” sounds before that time portended by the midnight hour itself. This is not *a cry at midnight*, as indicated by the translation in most versions, but *a cry pertaining to midnight*.

This cry is *an exhortation, a warning*, calling upon individuals to make the necessary preparations for *an impending meeting with the Bridegroom, on His threshing floor, at midnight*.

Matt. 25:6 could be better translated:

“But a midnight cry [*subject* of the cry rather than *time*] was raised, Lo, the Bridegroom is coming! Go ye out [*i.e.*, from the action of the verb in the Gk. text, ‘Continuously be going out,’ ‘Continuously be making preparations,’ ‘Continuously be getting ready’] to meet Him.”

The “midnight cry” is thus given. This is the same cry which Enoch referred to in his prophecy over 5,000 years ago:

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints [‘holy ones’ (angels)], to execute judgment...” (Jude 14, 15).

And Christians are exhorted to prepare for a midnight meeting with the Bridegroom.

The midnight cry being separate from and preceding midnight is also shown by the verb tense in the Greek text.

The words “was...made” relative to the midnight cry (v. 6) are the translation of a perfect tense, pointing to a cry made in past time with the results of this cry extending into the present and, so to speak, ringing in the ears of the ones who are to be preparing for a meeting with the Bridegroom. The cry rings out, a time of opportunity for preparation accompanies the cry, and the conclusion of the matter is seen when the Bridegroom returns.

“The midnight cry” is *meat in due season*, as given in the parable of the Householder and His servant (Matt. 24:45-51; cf. Matt. 25:6-9). “Meat,” as opposed to “milk,” *has to do particularly with those things surrounding the Lord’s return and the coming kingdom*.

In one parable *there is a servant who remains faithful or becomes unfaithful*, resulting in his either occupying a position as co-heir with Christ or being appointed his portion with the hypocrites.

In the other parable *there are wise and foolish virgins* who are either allowed or denied entrance into the marriage festivities.

These parables deal with different facets of *the SAME thing*. And, as previously seen, each succeeding parable was given to shed light upon and help explain the preceding parable/parables.

Once Christ had given all four parables, all four could be compared, one with the other, to help explain and better understand details in each, allowing the person to better understand

and grasp the complete, overall picture.

Thus, viewing verses five and six together, the midnight cry in verse six (a call for household servants to make necessary preparations for a meeting with the returning Bridegroom, at midnight) is seen to occur during the time of this world's darkness in verse five — a time which would cover the entire dispensation while the Householder was absent.

Midnight

The first appearance of the word “midnight” in Scripture is in Ex. 11:4, forming a first-mention principle, establishing an unchangeable pattern. It was at “midnight” when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt and “smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:29).

Thus, “midnight” is used for the first time in Scripture in connection with *God’s judgment*. And the manner in which this word is first used in Scripture will govern any subsequent usage of the word in Scripture. The word will *ALWAYS be found connected, after some fashion, with God’s judgment, EXACTLY as it is seen when first used in Scripture in Exodus chapters eleven and twelve*.

The Book of Ruth contains a subsequent usage of “midnight” in this respect. In the third chapter of this book, Ruth lay at the feet of and was dealt with by Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, *at midnight* (vv. 8-14). Ruth had prepared herself, and the meeting occurred *at midnight, on Boaz’s threshing floor*.

The account of Ruth appearing before Boaz on his threshing floor points to a future time, associated with *judgment* (Matt. 3:11, 12), when Christians will appear in the presence of and be dealt with by *Christ on His threshing floor*.

And this is what is seen in the parable of the ten virgins. The entire parable, as the preceding two parables and the parable about to follow, *CENTERS on this future time of judgment*.

Thus, the midnight cry in Matt. 25:6, in line with the way “midnight” is first introduced in Scripture — along with the parable itself and the context of the parable (the other three parables) — is associated with *judgment* (vv. 10-13; cf. Matt. 24:40ff, 45ff; 25:14ff).

The midnight cry relates to *judgment awaiting the Lord's people at the conclusion of the present dispensation*. Preparation is made prior to midnight, as in the Books of Exodus and Ruth; and *at midnight, the allotted time will have ended, with ONLY one thing awaiting Christians — judgment*.

The accounts in both the Books of Exodus and Ruth, forming types, illustrate two kinds of preparation relating to *midnight*; and these two types provide the necessary background material from the Old Testament to properly understand *present preparation in view of a future meeting with the Bridegroom, at midnight*, as given in the parable of the ten virgins.

1) In Egypt

When the Lord passed through the land of Egypt on the night of the Passover, He looked for *ONE thing* and *ONE thing ONLY*. He looked for *the BLOOD*. *NOTHING else was in view*:

"I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

And *the blood* shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and *when I see the blood, I will pass over you*, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12:12, 13).

The sentence of death had been pronounced upon the first-born throughout all the land of Egypt, both among the Israelites and among the Egyptians. *NONE was excluded*. God made *NO* distinction between those in the camp of Israel and those in the world relative to the death of the firstborn. Both were descendants of Adam, members of a fallen human race.

Even the animal creation, brought under the bondage of sin at the time Adam fell, was included in the Lord's decree. Consequently, there could be *NO* distinction between those either within or without the camp of Israel relative to the death of the firstborn. Both fell under the same sentence of death.

The Lord though "put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" by providing Israel with the paschal lamb. Each Israelite family could take a lamb from the flock, slay the lamb, and ap-

ply the lamb's blood to the "two side posts and on the upper door post" of the house in which the family dwelled.

There was to be "a lamb for an house," and the applied blood showed that the firstborn inside that house had already died, *vicariously*. The lamb had died *in the stead* of the firstborn in the family (Ex. 11:7; 12:1-7).

This is the reason that the Lord looked for *ONE thing ONLY* when He passed through the land of Egypt. *He looked for the BLOOD, properly applied.*

The presence of blood on the doorposts and lintel showed that the firstborn in the family had already died. He had experienced death via a substitute, a lamb from the flock (cf. Gen. 22:13; Heb. 11:17). The Lord then passed over that house, *for the sentence of death had ALREADY occurred; it had ALREADY been carried out.*

The absence of blood though showed *EXACTLY the opposite*. Death *had NOT* occurred inside that home. The firstborn *had NOT yet died*. The sentence of death *had NOT been carried out*. The Lord then executed His previously pronounced sentence, with *the firstborn in the family paying the penalty himself. He died apart from a substitute.*

Once the sentence had been carried out, *God's perfect justice and righteousness were satisfied. NO further reckoning with the firstborn on the basis of the pronounced death-decree could occur.* The firstborn in the family had died (whether vicariously or not was immaterial, for an irreversible death, in either instance, had occurred), and *that was the end of the matter.*

God's purpose for His people following the death of the firstborn though was an entirely different matter. They were then to be removed from Egypt and placed in another land as "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 12:40, 41; 19:4-6).

Beyond the death of the firstborn, the Israelites were dealt with on *an entirely different plane*. They were dealt with relative to that which lay ahead, which had to do with the purpose for their removal from Egypt; and such dealings occurred *on the basis of (NEVER relative to) the previous death of the firstborn in Egypt.*

The death of the firstborn, allowing the Israelites to be removed from Egypt and begin their pilgrim journey toward the

land, *did NOT* guarantee success on the pilgrim journey. Many Israelites were overthrown before even reaching Kadesh-Barnea; and, following their refusal to enter the land at Kadesh-Barnea, an entire accountable generation was overthrown. They *though were overthrown in the wilderness, NOT in Egypt.*

Their overthrow in the wilderness could have had NO possible affect whatsoever on that which had previously occurred in Egypt. *God had already dealt with them on the basis of the death of the firstborn.*

That was a finished matter, NEVER again to enter into His dealings with those who had left Egypt under Moses. Israelites overthrown in the wilderness were overthrown *on the right side of the blood but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling.*

The entire matter surrounding the death of the firstborn presents a facet of God's judgment which was past for the Israelites appropriating the blood of the paschal lambs in the type and is past for individuals appropriating the blood of the Paschal Lamb in the antitype. God was satisfied with the vicarious death of the firstborn from the flock in Egypt; and He is presently satisfied with the vicarious death of His Son at Golgotha, occurring fifteen hundred years later. In either instance — type or antitype — for those appropriating the blood, *the death of the firstborn was/is PAST, and any issue surrounding this death can NEVER be raised again.*

Once an Israelite had appropriated the blood *there could NEVER be a rendering of judgment against him relative to the death of the firstborn. FULL judgment had already occurred.* This fact is aptly illustrated by the Lord passing through the land of Egypt and *passing over* the houses where the blood had been properly applied.

It is *EXACTLY* the same in the antitype. Once an individual has appropriated the blood *there can NEVER be a rendering of judgment against him relative to the death of the firstborn. FULL judgment has already occurred.* God has already judged sin in the person of His Son. And the matter as it exists between God and man today is *EXACTLY* the same as it existed between God and man in Egypt almost thirty-five hundred years ago: "when I see the blood..."

Thus, it is absurd to even think (as many erroneously do) that a saved person can ever be lost, for the whole of the issue surrounding the vicarious death of the firstborn would have to be

done away with. In short, that which God has established and decreed relative to man's eternal salvation would have to be nullified, including God's satisfaction — an impossibility.

And *NOT ONLY* is the preceding true, *BUT* the promulgation of the thought that man can lose his salvation *obscures the true issue at hand*. The issue following salvation is *NO longer* — *it can NEVER again be* — the death of the firstborn. That is a *past, finished, irreversible event*. The issue at hand following salvation is *realizing the GOAL of one's calling; and God deals with those whom He has redeemed relative to THIS matter, NEVER relative to that which occurred in Egypt*.

The death of the firstborn is one facet of preparation relating to *midnight and the appearance of the Bridegroom*. Judgment is *past*; and at the time of the Bridegroom's appearance, individuals having appropriated the blood will be dealt with after this fashion.

That is to say, *they can NEVER again be judged on the basis of that for which they have already been judged*. Judgment is *past* (John 3:18), and *God's perfect justice and righteousness have been satisfied*.

However, as in the type so in the antitype. *This past judgment has NOTHING to do with realizing the GOAL of one's calling*. The death of the firstborn is preparation for meeting the Bridegroom relative to *eternal life, NOT relative to entrance into the land*. Preparation for the latter is *subsequent to and completely separate from the former*.

The former places the person in the house as a household servant; the latter has to do with the person rendering an account as a household servant, *which is what the future meeting with the Bridegroom is about*.

2) On the Threshing Floor

ALL Christians will one day go forth to meet Christ at His judgment seat, typified in the Book of Ruth by Ruth going forth to meet Boaz on his threshing floor.

The threshing floor was *the place where that of value (the grain) was separated from that of no value (the chaff)*, which is *EXACTLY* what will occur at Christ's judgment seat. The Christians' works will be tried "*in fire,*" and *a separation will occur*. Works comparable to "*gold, silver, precious stones*" *will endure the fire*; but works comparable to "*wood, hay, stubble*" *will be burned by the fire* (I Cor. 3:11-15).

A future judgment of this nature is what John the Baptist called attention to in Matt. 3:7-12 when dealing with Israel's religious leaders, *calling for the nation's repentance and referring to fruit bearing*.

Using the symbolism of the threshing floor, John concluded that which he proclaimed to these religious leaders by saying:

“Whose fan is in his hand [Christ's hand], and he will thoroughly purge his floor [His threshing floor], and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (v. 12).

The whole of the matter — *preparation, events on the threshing floor, and that which follows* — is seen outlined in a typical manner in the Book of Ruth. Ruth, in the final analysis, is seen preparing herself in a *threefold manner* for meeting Boaz on his threshing floor at the end of the harvest. *Ruth washed herself, anointed herself, and clothed herself with proper garments* before going forth to meet Boaz.

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor [the threshing floor]...” (Ruth 3:3a).

And meeting Boaz in this manner, on his threshing floor, was with a view to two things: *the redemption of an inheritance, and Ruth becoming Boaz's wife* (vv. 9ff).

This meeting also occurred at “midnight” (v. 8), typically foreshadowing a *time of judgment*, in complete keeping with both the first mention of “midnight” in Scripture (used in connection with *judgment* [Ex. 11:4]) and with that which John the Baptist told Israel's religious leaders in Matt. 3:12.

Ruth's preparation in the type is the same preparation which Christian's must make in the antitype. Ruth prepared herself, after a certain fashion, to meet Boaz on his threshing floor, at midnight, *with a view to a redeemed inheritance and becoming his wife*.

And Christians *MUST* likewise prepare themselves, after the same fashion, to meet Christ on His threshing floor, at midnight, *with a view to a redeemed inheritance and becoming His wife*.

a) “Wash Thyself”

“Washing” has to do with a *cleansing from present defilement*.

Within the scope of the ministry of priests in the Old Testament, a complete washing of the body occurred at the time one entered into the priesthood, *NEVER to be repeated* (Ex. 29:4; 40:12-15).

Subsequent washings of parts of the body then occurred at the brazen laver in the courtyard of the tabernacle as the priests ministered between the brazen altar and the Holy Place (Ex. 30:19-21). Their hands and feet became soiled as they carried out their ministry, and the brazen laver had upper and lower basins for washing these soiled parts of the body.

Washings in the Old Testament were thus looked upon in two senses — a washing of *the complete body* (a one-time initial cleansing), followed by washings of *parts of the body* (numerous subsequent cleansings). It was these two types of cleansings which Jesus referred to when speaking to Peter in John 13:8, 10:

“If I wash [Gk., *nipto*, referring to a part of the body (the Septuagint uses this same word in Ex. 30:19, 21)] thee not, thou hast no part with me [note: ‘with me,’ NOT ‘in me’]...

He that is washed [Gk., *louo*, referring to the entire body (the Septuagint uses this word in Ex. 29:4; 40:12)] needeth not save to wash [*nipto*] his feet...” (vv. 8b, 10a).

Peter had been washed once (described by the word *louo* [his complete body]); now he needed continued washings (described by the word *nipto* [parts of the body]). And, apart from these continued washings, he could have NO part “with” Christ (contextually, *the kingdom and positions with Christ therein* were in view).

Bringing the typological teachings of the Old Testament and Christ’s statement to Peter over into the lives of Christians today, the matter would be the same.

Christians, part of a priesthood during the present dispensation (1 Peter 2:5), received a complete washing (*louo*, the entire body) *at the time they entered into the priesthood, at the time they were saved.*

Now, as priests ministering for their Lord, *because of defilement through contact with the world, they need continued partial washings (nipto, parts of the body).* And, apart from these continued washings, *Christians can have NO part with Christ in His future kingdom.*

All cleansing is accomplished on the basis of Christ's past and present work in relation to His shed blood.

Christ died at Calvary, shedding His blood, to effect our redemption. Those appropriating the blood have been washed (*louo*) and have entered into the priesthood (corresponding in the parallel type to the death of the paschal lambs and the application of the blood in Ex. 12:1ff).

And Christ's blood is today on the mercy seat of the heavenly tabernacle, with Christ ministering, on the basis of His shed blood, on our behalf, in the Holy of Holies, to effect a continued cleansing (*nipito*) for the "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) which He is about to bring forth.

Thus, the Lord has set apart *a cleansed (louo)* people through whom He is accomplishing His plans and purposes. And He has provided a means whereby He can keep those whom He has set apart *clean (nipito)*.

Cleansing through the work of Christ as High Priest though is not something which occurs automatically.

Ruth had to act herself. She had to prepare herself for the impending meeting with Boaz, on his threshing floor.

And Christians *MUST* likewise prepare themselves for an impending meeting with Christ, on His threshing floor.

In Ruth's case, she washed herself.

Today, Christ does the washing, but Christians, as Ruth, *MUST* act. It is *ONLY* as we "confess our sins," judging ourselves (I Cor. 11:31, 32), that Christ effects cleansing on our behalf.

"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).

b) "Anoint Thee"

"Oil" was used in the Old Testament Scriptures 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 duties in the office to which he was being consecrated.

For example, Saul was anointed the first king over Israel (I

Sam. 10:1, 6); and, following Saul's refusal to do that which God had commanded concerning Amalek, David was anointed king in Saul's stead (I Sam. 16:13). And, as clearly shown, "oil" is used in both of these passages to symbolize *God's Spirit*. The Spirit came upon both Saul and David following their anointing, and the Spirit empowered both for the tasks which they were to perform.

The parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25:1-13 deals centrally with this same overall issue, with "oil" used symbolically in the parable in *EXACTLY* the same manner as it is used in the Old Testament. *ALL* of the virgins possessed oil, *BUT ONLY* the five wise virgins possessed an extra supply of oil.

And when they were called to an accounting — at "midnight" — *ONLY the five wise virgins* were allowed to enter into the marriage festivities with the Bridegroom (vv. 6ff).

As the parable would relate to Christians, *ALL* Christians possess the Holy Spirit. He *indwells* every Christian. *BUT NOT* every Christian has *the extra supply of Oil*. *NOT* every Christian is *filled* with the Holy Spirit. And when Christians are called to an accounting — at "midnight" — *ONLY those filled with the Spirit* will be allowed to enter into the marriage festivities with the Bridegroom.

This same thing is seen in the symbolism of the second part of Ruth's preparation for meeting Boaz on his threshing floor at midnight.

Ruth *could NOT have been* properly prepared for meeting Boaz apart from anointing herself; the ten virgins, in like fashion, *could NOT have been* properly prepared for meeting the Bridegroom at midnight apart from each possessing an extra supply of oil; and Christians today *CANNOT be* properly prepared for meeting their Lord at midnight apart from being filled with the Spirit.

And this will all become evident when the third and last part of Ruth's preparation is viewed, for *an inseparable connection* exists between all three parts.

c) "Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee"

NOT ONLY was Ruth to be clean and to be anointed with oil *BUT* she was also to be properly arrayed. *Ruth was going forth to meet the bridegroom.*

Naomi's words, "put thy raiment upon thee," in the light of that which was involved (events expected to culminate in Ruth's marriage to Boaz), *can ONLY* refer to *special apparel* for the occasion. Ruth's apparel, in which she was to clothe herself, would reflect the occasion at hand.

This facet of Ruth's preparation, pointing to present preparation which Christians are to make, is seen in the parable of the marriage feast in Matt. 22:1-14. In this parable, an improperly clothed man appeared at the festivities surrounding the marriage of "a certain" king's son. This man appeared *WITHOUT* a *wedding garment*, and he was *NOT ONLY* denied entrance into the festivities *BUT* he was cast into the darkness outside.

(A reference to the darkness outside [*the outer darkness*] also appears in the parable of the talents [Matt. 25:30]. And this parable deals with *EXACTLY* the same thing as the previous parable [the ten virgins (vv. 1-13)], though from a different perspective.)

The "certain king" and "his son" in Matt. 22:2 can refer to none other than *God the Father* and *His Son*, with the festivities surrounding the "marriage of the Lamb" in Revelation chapter nineteen in view.

In Rev. 19:7, 8, the bride is said to *have made herself ready by having arrayed herself* in "fine linen" ("array herself" rather than "be arrayed" is the correct rendering in v. 8); and this "fine linen" in which the bride will array herself is specifically said to be "the righteousness [*lit.*, 'the righteous acts'] of the saints."

Christians preparing themselves, as Ruth prepared herself, *MUST array themselves* in the proper apparel for their future meeting with Christ — a meeting which *begins* on His threshing floor (at His judgment seat) and *carries over* into the festivities which follow.

Righteous acts, forming the wedding garment, emanate out of faithfulness to one's calling. Works emanate out of faithfulness; and works, in turn, bring faith to its proper goal, while the wedding garment is being formed (*cf.* Heb. 11:17-19, 31; James 2:14-26; I Peter 1:9).

And it is evident that a Christian *NOT* filled with the Spirit — typified by the second part of Ruth's preparation, anointing

herself — is in *NO* position to perform righteous acts (works) which make up the wedding garment.

Scripture clearly reveals that Christians will appear in Christ's presence in that coming day in *one of two ways*.

Some will possess wedding garments, and others will not.

The words "clothed" and "naked" are used in Scripture to distinguish between the appearance of individuals in these two different manners (Rev. 3:17, 18; cf. Rom. 8:35); and Christians within both groups will be dealt with in accordance with Matt. 22:10-13.

Those Christians *properly clothed* (possessing wedding garments) will be dealt with after one fashion, and those *improperly clothed* (lacking wedding garments, naked) will be dealt with after an entirely different fashion.

Those in *the former group* will be allowed to enter into the marriage festivities, with a view to their subsequently becoming the Lamb's wife and occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom, forming His consort queen.

Those in *the latter group* though will be denied entrance into the marriage festivities and will consequently *NOT* be among those subsequently forming the wife of the Lamb, His consort queen, and all that appertains therein.

Accordingly, they will have *NO part* with Christ in His reign over the earth.

Concluding Remarks:

Scripture, rather than repeatedly distinguishing between the saved and the unsaved or with issues pertaining to both, within their respective spheres, *concerns itself almost entirely with the saved*.

And, concerning itself with the saved in this manner, *two classes of individuals are seen* — *faithful* and *unfaithful* — which are often erroneously seen and dealt with as saved and unsaved individuals.

The beginning point is the issue surrounding one's eternal destiny, distinguishing between the saved and the unsaved:

"He that *believeth on him* is not condemned: but he that *believeth not* is condemned already, because *he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:18).

BUT, Scripture does NOT continue to deal with this matter. The distinction is made, and Scripture THEN, beyond this beginning point, deals with the saved, NOT with the unsaved.

Scripture simply presents the unsaved as *condemned* and refers to their destructive end insofar as present life on this earth is concerned and their future judgment, which will be according to “works” (cf. Ps. 2:1ff; Rev. 20:11-15).

And it is *NOT* because of works that the unsaved are condemned but because *they have NOT believed* on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the unsaved ultimately being judged according to works *can have NOTHING* to do with their eternal destiny, *ONLY* with the place which each will occupy in the lake of fire throughout the eternal ages (also part of God’s perfect justice and righteousness). “Works” *MUST enter in, for there could be NO other basis for their judgment.*

As previously stated, teachings in Scripture are directed to *the saved, NOT the unsaved*; and Scripture presents the saved as *NOT condemned*, referring to their coming deliverance from this world and their following judgment, which will be according to “works” (cf. I Cor. 3:11-15; 15:51-57).

Scripture goes into considerable detail regarding matters as they pertain to the saved. It is *NOT* because of works that saved individuals are uncondemned; rather, it is because *they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ*. Thus, the future judgment of the saved, on the basis of works, *can have NOTHING* to do with their eternal destiny, *ONLY* with their place in the coming kingdom (necessary to satisfy God’s perfect justice and righteousness).

Consequently, “works,” which emanate out of and are inseparably related to faithfulness, *MUST enter into this judgment*. As in the judgment of the unsaved (which will occur after the judgment of the saved, 1,000 years later), *NO other basis for judgment exists*.

Scripture is replete with information concerning *both sides* of the issue as it relates to the saved and their calling.

There are faithful servants and there are unfaithful servants; there are wise servants and there are foolish servants.

ALL possess the same calling; *BUT ONLY* the faithful, the wise, will ultimately realize their calling. *ONLY* rejection and chastisement await the unfaithful, the foolish.

5

GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM

ALL Going Out, Prepared OR Unprepared

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out [‘are going out’].

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves” (Matt. 25:7-9).

ALL ten virgins arose, ALL trimmed their lamps, ALL possessed oil, BUT ONLY the five wise virgins possessed an extra supply of oil. And because the five foolish virgins did NOT possess this extra supply of oil, their lamps, at a particular time seen in the text, began to go out (the words, “...our lamps are gone out” [v. 8] should literally read, “...our lamps are going out [a present tense verb denoting something in progress],” showing an initial supply of oil but NOT the extra portion to keep the lamps burning).

The ten virgins represent those to whom the kingdom of the heavens was offered following Israel’s rejection of this offer, following the removal of this aspect of the kingdom from Israel, and following the house of Israel being left desolate (Matt. 21:33-44; 23:37-39).

It was *at this time*, following the kingdom being taken from Israel and the house being left desolate, that *the kingdom of the heavens* is seen “likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matt. 25:1).

Thus, the ten virgins *can ONLY* represent *those forming a house separate from the house of Israel during the time that the house of Israel lies desolate* (Matt. 24:40-51).

And “ten,” the number of *ordinal completion*, points to *ALL the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens during the time when God deals with this separate group of household servants, which can ONLY be identified as ALL Christians throughout the present dispensation.*

“Oil” is used in Scripture to symbolize *the Holy Spirit* (ref. Chapters III, IV in this book); and, brought over into that which is taught in the parable of the ten virgins concerning Christians, the possession or nonpossession of “Oil” would have to present a dual truth:

- 1) *Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 1:13).
- 2) *Every Christian though is not filled with the Holy Spirit* (Eph. 5:18).

That is, within the framework of the parable of the ten virgins, every Christian possesses a vessel with Oil, but *NOT* every Christian possesses a vessel with an extra supply of Oil. And apart from this extra supply of Oil, a Christian *CANNOT* pass safely through the time of this world’s darkness.

Such a Christian will *experience spiritual disaster in his pilgrim walk during the present time*; and, relative to things pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens, such a Christian will *experience rejection in the Lord’s presence yet future*.

All Arose, Trimmed Their Lamps

The midnight cry caused all ten virgins to arise and trim their lamps. This cry concerned *judgment awaiting ALL of the virgins, ALL Christians*, at a time immediately following the present dispensation.

That is, *ALL ten arose and trimmed their lamps with a view to judgment out ahead*.

In the parable it is assumed that *ALL heard the midnight cry, with ALL acting on this basis*. This is the central message which is to be proclaimed to *ALL Christians during the present dispensation*.

And the fact that *ALL heard*, pointing to *ALL Christians hearing*, reflects on an interesting thought in the light of that which is occurring in Christendom today.

The manner in which this is presented in the parable *renders it unthinkable that Christians would NOT hear this message* — a message concerning the coming kingdom, which *ALL Christians are supposed*

to hear, for it is the CENTRAL message within the instructions which the Householder left with His household servants.

This thought is similarly set forth in the parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:3-8.

In this parable, which would appear to be *ALL inclusive*, as the parable of the ten virgins, *ALL* heard the “word of the kingdom” (cf. vv. 18-23).

The parable refers to four types of individuals sown out in the world, with a view to their bringing forth fruit for the kingdom. Each heard the message concerning the coming kingdom.

BUT, three of the four brought forth *NO* fruit, corresponding to the five foolish virgins who heard the message concerning impending judgment but failed to make the necessary preparations.

In other words, the matter is presented from a *far more positive position* in these parables than the situation which actually exists in Christendom today. Matters are presented from a position that would have been seen in first-century Christianity, *but NOT seen in Christianity today*.

The vast majority of Christians presently filling pews in Churches throughout the land *have NEVER really been exposed to the message concerning the coming kingdom*, which is to say, *these Christians have NEVER been exposed to the very purpose for their salvation*.

And the manner in which these parables present the subject matter at hand *renders it unthinkable that this would ever occur*.

After an individual has been saved, he is then to hear the message concerning *the purpose for his salvation*. God has placed evangelists and pastor-teachers in the Church to proclaim the complete panorama of the good news (Eph. 4:11ff) — the good news concerning *the present grace of God*, to be proclaimed to the unsaved, and the good news concerning *the coming glory of Christ*, to be proclaimed to the saved (Acts 20:24-28; cf. II Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:8-10).

(The words “pastors and teachers” in Eph. 4:11 refer to *one group of individuals*, not two groups. They are *pastor-teachers*, not “pastors and teachers,” as translated in many English versions.

This is seen in the structure of the Greek text. There are two nouns in the same case form, connected by *kai* [and], with a definite article

preceding the first noun but not repeated before the second noun. In a structure of this nature, the second noun [*didaskalos*, “teacher”] is seen as simply a further description of the first noun [*poimen*, “pastor,” “shepherd”].

The pastor [shepherd of the flock] is to be a *teacher* [teacher of the flock]. He is to lead the flock *through the proclaimed Word*.)

When distinguishing between the offices of evangelist and pastor-teacher, the message of an evangelist would be seen as centrally to the unsaved, though not to the exclusion of the saved; and the message of a pastor-teacher would be seen as centrally to the saved, though not to the exclusion of the unsaved.

(The word “evangelist” is a translation of the Greek word, *euangelistes*, a noun form of *euaggelizo*, the word translated “gospel [‘good news’]” in the New Testament. The word *euaggelistes* [evangelist] simply means, “a proclaimer of good news,” which could have to do with good news proclaimed to either the saved or the unsaved.

Thus, it is *NOT* really correct to think of the ministry of an evangelist as always having to do with the unsaved. This could be the case with some evangelists but not necessarily the case with others.

The preceding though *would NOT* be true of a pastor-teacher. He has a flock which the Lord has entrusted to his care, and his ministry is centrally to this flock, leading those in the flock from immaturity to maturity in “the faith.” Thus, *his message is centrally to the saved*.

Ideally, the evangelist would be the one to reach the unsaved, for he doesn’t have a flock in the same sense as a pastor-teacher, requiring his constant attention. And the possession or nonpossession of a flock is the only real difference in the message and ministry of the pastor-teacher and the evangelist. Both are to proclaim the complete panorama of the good news, where the Lord has placed them, as the Lord leads.)

The evangelist is to go out into virgin territory and proclaim the gospel message to the unsaved. He is to announce the good news that Christ has died for man’s sins (I Cor. 15:3). After an individual has been saved, he is then to be placed under the ministry of a pastor-teacher, with a view to growth from immaturity to maturity, beginning with milk and progressing on to meat and strong meat (cf. Heb. 5:11-14; I Peter 2:1, 2).

The object of growth in the Christian life centers around *the purpose for one's salvation, which has to do with the coming kingdom* (Heb. 6:1ff). Individuals have been saved (through hearing the good news concerning a vicarious death, with its associated shed blood); and they have been saved with a view to their one day ascending the throne and reigning as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom (good news concerning the coming glory of Christ, which they are to hear following their salvation).

The former message, ideally, is to be proclaimed by an evangelist and the latter by a pastor-teacher.

However, situations in ministry often require changes from that which might be considered ideal. *Regardless though, the important thing is that the person is to hear the full panorama of the good news — both the good news of the present grace of God and the good news of the coming glory of Christ.*

The thought of all the virgins arising and trimming their lamps, brought over into Christianity, *presupposes that pastor-teachers have proclaimed the message concerning a midnight meeting with the Bridegroom.*

However, a proclamation of this message by pastor-teachers and Christians subsequently making the necessary preparations for meeting the Bridegroom are entirely different matters, as is evident in the parable of the ten virgins.

Preparations for meeting the bridegroom on His threshing floor, at midnight, *may or may not* follow the proclamation of the message. The ten virgins arising and trimming their lamps *shows NOTHING beyond the fact that these were saved individuals who had heard the message concerning events at the judgment seat.*

Preparedness or unpreparedness for impending judgment is shown in subsequent verses.

Lamps Continuing to Burn, Going Out

The lamps carried by all ten virgins were burning; otherwise there could be *NO trimming of all the lamps or a going OUT of some of the lamps*. The distinguishing difference between the wise and the foolish was shown *in the possession or nonpossession of an extra*

supply of oil. The wise “took oil in their vessels with their lamps [an extra supply in separate containers].” The foolish though “took no oil with them [they carried NO extra supply in separate containers]” (vv. 3, 4).

An interesting point to be noted is the fact that the lamps of the foolish *began going OUT following the midnight cry.* Their lamps had apparently burned up to this point.

The initial supply of oil, from all appearances, had apparently proved sufficient *UNTIL preparedness for the Bridegroom’s return was introduced.* THEN, the necessity of possessing an extra portion became evident as the lamps of the foolish began going OUT.

The thought set forth is evident. It is the same as that set forth in the context leading into and following Eph. 5:18 — the command to be “filled with the Spirit [possess the extra supply of Oil].”

Prior to this command, Paul had exhorted Christians to “walk worthy” of their high calling (4:1ff). He then dealt with the necessity of having “pastor-teachers” in the Churches (4:11-16), the necessity of putting off “the old man” and putting on “the new man” (4:22-25), and he referred to an “inheritance” lying out ahead (5:1-5; cf. 1:11, 17, 18; 3:6).

Following the command to be “filled with the Spirit,” Paul, through instruction concerning wives, husbands, children, servants, and masters, illustrates the filling of the Spirit in various individuals’ lives.

“Wives” filled with the Spirit *will be submission to their husbands* (5:21-24, 33), “husbands” filled with the Spirit *will love their wives* (5:25-33), “Children” filled with the Spirit *will be obedient to their parents* (6:1-4), “servants” filled with the Spirit *will be obedient to their masters* (6:5-8), and “masters” filled with the Spirit *will show proper treatment to their servants* (6:9).

The preceding then leads into an exhortation to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (6:10), followed by a discourse dealing with a warfare emanating from the heavens and the command, in view of this warfare, to properly clothe oneself with “the whole armor of God” (6:11-18).

A spiritual warfare is presently being waged, and it is one between men upon the earth and fallen angels in the heavens:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [‘age’], against spiritual wickedness in high places [‘against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenlies’]” (v. 12).

And the revealed primary requirement for the warfare, before ever attempting to clothe oneself in the proper armor, is *being filled with the Spirit, possessing the extra supply of Oil*.

If a Christian has become engaged in and expects to be successful in the battle at hand, *he MUST possess a work of the Spirit beyond the Spirit’s initial work at the point of salvation. He MUST not only be indwelt by the Spirit but he MUST also be filled with the Spirit.*

This is what is taught in the parable of the ten virgins as well as numerous other places in Scripture (e.g., as previously illustrated in the overall structure of the latter part of the Book of Ephesians).

Without the “extra portion” a Christian will be powerless in the battle, *for the battle is NOT actually his*, but the Lord’s (I Sam. 17:47; cf. Eph. 6:10). Spiritual weapons *MUST* be used against that which is spiritual within Satan’s kingdom in the heavens (cf. John 4:24).

The battle from Eph. 6:12 doesn’t really begin in earnest *UNTIL* one makes his move relative to the heavenlies in which Satan and his angels reside. That is, *UNTIL* a Christian begins moving out into that area surrounding *the purpose for his salvation*, which has to do with *an inheritance in the heavenlies as co-heir with Christ*, *there is really LITTLE or NO spiritual warfare in the true sense of the word.*

BUT, once this move is made, the warfare quickly begins in ALL its fury!

And whether or not the Christian is properly prepared will *rapidly become evident*. This is the point where the filling of the Spirit, the extra portion of Oil, enters into the matter. This is why the lamps of the foolish virgins *began going OUT at a certain time*.

They arose and trimmed their lamps with a view to the midnight cry; and *NOT* having the extra supply of Oil, their lamps naturally began *going OUT* when they moved into an area where spiritual values were involved.

Christians need to face reality concerning that which is clearly revealed in Scripture. Christians have a calling which involves their one day ascending into a heavenly realm and replacing the

incumbent rulers. Christ will occupy the position presently held by Satan, and Christians will occupy positions presently held by angels ruling under Satan. Christians will occupy these positions as co-heirs with Christ, seated with Christ on His throne.

The present sons of God are about to be replaced by an entirely new and different order of Sons — Christ and His co-heirs (*cf.* Rom. 8:19; Heb. 2:10). Satan and his angels know what is about to occur, and that's what the warfare is about.

Christians are the destined possessors of positions of power and authority in the heavenly realm; and knowing this, Satan is amassing all the forces at his command, seeking to retain his hold on the present kingdom of the heavens.

Satan and his angels have ruled over the earth from this realm since time immemorial, since time preceding the creation of man.

BUT, a change is in the offing.

"The world to come ['the inhabited world to come']" *has NOT been committed to angelic rule, but rather to that of man* (Heb. 2:5); and when Christians manifest an interest in this realm, the "so great salvation" of Heb. 2:3, Satan begins to marshal his forces.

The spiritual warfare then begins in ALL its fury, and woe to the Christian who moves into this realm unprepared to face the enemy.

This is the point where it becomes very evident whether one possesses or lacks the extra supply of Oil, the filling of the Spirit.

This is the point where the lamp either continues to burn or begins going out, producing victory on the one hand or allowing for defeat on the other hand.

(For additional information in the preceding realm, refer to the author's book, *The Spiritual Warfare*.)

Go and Buy for Yourselves

When the five foolish virgins realized that their lamps were going out, they requested extra oil from the five wise virgins. Extra oil though was *NOT* to be obtained after this fashion.

The foolish were told by the wise, "Not so...but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves" (v. 9). *They were to go to the source of supply, and they were to go themselves.*

The five foolish virgins were to obtain the extra supply of oil in the same place and manner as the five wise virgins had obtained their extra supply. There were exchangers who provided the oil, for a price; and the price was extracted, and the oil was dispensed on a personal basis.

Each person had to go to the exchanger himself and pay the price. The oil would then, accordingly, be dispensed into the purchaser's personal vessel.

Brought over into the thought of Christians being filled with the Holy Spirit, going to the source of supply on a personal basis would be perfectly in line with the Christian experience. *Every Christian MUST himself personally appropriate that which God has for him, and it is to be appropriated from the proper source, from the Lord Himself.*

The thought of "purchasing" in relation to the filling of the Holy Spirit may at first sound strange, but it shouldn't. *There is a price to be paid, and every Christian going to the Lord to have his earthen vessel filled with Oil MUST pay that price.*

The price though is not money. *The price is time spent with the Lord in His Word.* The means set forth in Scripture to effect the filling of the Spirit is the same as that set forth to effect the transformation, the metamorphosis, in Rom. 12:2. Both the filling of the Spirit and the metamorphosis occur simultaneously in the life of a Christian, and they are so inseparably related that it would really be impossible for one to occur apart from the other.

The filling of the Spirit and the metamorphosis occur together in a progressive fashion as a Christian receives "the implanted word [that which is compatible with and natural for his new nature]" into his saved human Spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit then takes this Word and progressively does a work in the person's life, resulting in the filling of the Spirit, the metamorphosis, and ultimately the salvation of his soul (cf. Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 3:10; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:10, 16, 17; James 1:21 [ref. Chapter III of this book; see also the author's book, Salvation of the Soul, Chapter IV]).

The Lord has so established the matter that the price required for the filling of the Spirit can be paid by any Christian. The price though, in one sense of the word, is *rather expensive*.

It involves, in its complete analysis, *denying oneself, taking up one's cross, and following Christ*. It involves *losing one's life for Christ's sake* (Matt. 16:24-27).

This is one reason for the Laodicean state of Christendom in the world today. Very few Christians are willing to pay a price of this nature.

Though the price is expensive, the end result so far offsets the price incurred that one can not even be compared with the other.

Paying the price results in the filling of the Spirit, which results in the Christian being empowered to overcome in the spiritual warfare at hand, which will result in the Christian finding himself in a position to one day hear the Lord say:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant..." (Matt. 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17, 19).

Not paying the price though is *rather expensive as well*.

Such will result in the Christian *NOT* being filled with the Holy Spirit, not being empowered to overcome in the spiritual warfare at hand, and being left in a position where he *can ONLY* hear the Lord one day say:

"Thou wicked and slothful servant..." (Matt. 25:26; Luke 19:22).

A Christian should view the matter in a similar manner to the way Christ viewed the sufferings associated with Calvary in relation to that which lay out ahead, as seen in Heb. 12:2:

"...for the joy...set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The word "for" in this verse — "*for the joy*" — is a translation of the Greek word *anti*, which refers to setting one thing over against another. The "joy" was set over against the "shame."

He considered the ignominious "shame" associated with Calvary a thing of little consequence in comparison to the "joy" which lay ahead. The ignominious "shame" was no small thing, *BUT* the "joy" *was so much greater that, comparatively, Christ could ONLY look upon the former as of little consequence*.

The “joy” set before Christ had to do with that coming day when He, along with co-heirs taken from among those being redeemed at Calvary, would *rule and reign over the earth* (cf. Heb. 1:9).

Events of that coming day so far outweighed events of the present day that Christ considered being spat upon, beaten, and humiliated to the point of being arrayed as a mock King things of comparatively little consequence.

He then went to Calvary, paying the price for man’s redemption, so that *even the very ones carrying out His persecution and crucifixion could one day find themselves in a position to participate in “the joy set before him.”*

Redeemed man has been called into *the HIGHEST of all possible callings*, and *ONLY* a very foolish person (a *moros* [a ‘moron’], remaining within the framework of the parable of the ten virgins) would fail to properly prepare himself in view of that which lies out ahead.

A properly prepared Christian will be able to overcome on all fronts in the battle with the enemy from above. The enemy though will use those here below (*invariably, other Christians*) in the battle.

This is the reason Scripture states:

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12).

As the battle rages, persecution, along with anything else the enemy may throw the Christians’ way, should be considered *a thing of comparatively little consequence* in view of that which “God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:6-10).

Warning

We’re living very near the end of the present dispensation, immediately preceding Christ’s return. The Laodicean state of the Church, as it was prophesied to exist during these latter days, is evident on every hand.

The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal has produced the present state of affairs and is now doing its final, most damaging work of the entire dispensation (Matt. 13:33).

Satan knows full well that his time is short. He knows that the period which God has set aside to call out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age is almost over. And Christians can rest assured *that Satan is NOT standing idly by.*

To the contrary, *he can ONLY be active as NEVER before.*

Knowing the nearness of the approaching hour, when “he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37), *could lead Satan to ONLY one course of action:*

At ALL costs, he MUST thwart God’s plans and purposes, for this is the ONLY way that he can continue to occupy his present position on the throne.

The retention or forfeiture of “the kingdom of the world” (Rev. 11:15, ASV), ruled from the heavens, is the great issue at hand. Satan’s attack upon Christianity since the inception of the Church *has always had ONLY one end in view — retaining his hold on the kingdom.*

He is attacking the very ones called into existence to one day constitute powers and authorities in the very kingdom which he presently rules, and his attack is *NEITHER an afterthought NOR the work of a novice. It is a well-planned attack, executed by the “god of this world [‘age’]”* (II Cor. 4:3, 4).

Satan’s method, set forth very early in Scripture, *NEVER* changes. When he approached Eve in Genesis chapter three, *he approached her in a deceptive manner and he used the Word of God* (vv. 1-5).

This is the method he used to bring about Eve’s fall, resulting in Adam’s fall; and this is also the method he has used during the intervening six thousand years since that time.

Today, Satan continues after this same fashion. He approaches the Christian in a deceptive manner and he uses the Word of God, resulting in *Christians being deceived and defeated on every hand.*

In view of the reason for Satan’s attack and the time in which we presently live, note something and note it well:

As previously stated, the ONLY Christian really in a position to withstand the onslaught of Satan is one in possession of the extra supply of Oil, one filled with the Holy Spirit.

The battle is spiritual; it is fought in the power of the Spirit, and apart from the filling of the Spirit there can be NO spiritual power for victory in the conflict. This is a teaching drawn

from Scripture *which Satan would fully understand*; and it would only logically follow, *since this is the ONLY way his defeat can be effected during the present time, that he would do ALL within his power to prevent Christians from being filled with the Spirit.*

Understanding how the filling of the Spirit is brought to pass, understanding that being filled with the Spirit is *the ONLY way* a Christian can be victorious in the warfare against Satan and his angels, and understanding Satan's present objective in the warfare, will cast a completely different light upon several things occurring in Christian circles today.

1) Conditions in Christendom

Within the confines of the lukewarm Laodicean Church, spiritual victory is relatively unknown.

Christianity has become very religious. There is little conflict, for there are few warriors properly equipped to engage in battle.

In this respect, Satan has the vast majority of Christians EX-
ACTLY where he wants them. *Saved? Yes! But they are completely unequipped for the warfare, allowing Satan to be the victor!*

Satan has worked for two millenniums to make certain Christianity existed in its present decadent condition at the close of this dispensation, rendering the movement as a whole incapable of resisting spiritual powers and authorities. *The ONLY hope* for those in the Laodicean Church is found in Rev. 3:18, 19.

Speaking to *this Church (Christians in the Church today)*, Christ said:

"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.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

Christ is then seen standing at the door of the Church and knocking, promising any Christian who opens the door (any Christian who heeds His words given in vv. 18, 19):

"I will come in to him [come inside the Church, to that individual], and will sup with him, and he with me."

An overcomer's promise is then given (v. 21), which would necessitate the Christian becoming properly equipped for the warfare with Satan and his angels:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Certain Christians within the confines of the Laodicean Church during the latter days will heed Christ's words and respond accordingly, but the Church as a whole will remain in its present decadent, powerless condition. Thus, *the ONLY battle* really being fought is not one between Satan and Christendom in general but *one between Satan and properly equipped Christians within Christendom*.

The vast majority of Christians are *NEITHER* in a position to engage in a spiritual battle against Satan and his angels *NOR* in a position to win in the race of the faith (which has to do with victory in the spiritual warfare, a warfare in which they are not really engaged). Satan has the vast majority of Christians *EXACTLY* where he wants them.

Thus, he can simply leave them alone, with their pseudo-spirituality within their man-made programs and ways of doing things.

2) A Counterfeit

Aside from the general condition in which Christendom finds itself at the end of the present dispensation, there is another major problem which is perhaps even more dangerous. This problem has developed during recent times (particularly during the past one hundred fifty years) but has only come fully into the forefront, moving across all denominational lines, during the past several decades. *The filling of the Spirit is being counterfeited*.

This is being accomplished (by Satan) through those advocating a restoration among Christians of the power and work of the Holy Spirit as it occurred during the opening years of the present dispensation, recorded in the Book of Acts.

The central focus and emphasis of their message is upon a work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians (usually called the "baptism of the Holy Spirit"), in keeping with the experience of the one hundred twenty on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:2-4.

A purported present work of the Spirit after this fashion is often referred to as “a renewal” of what is called *Pentecostal power*, even though such is *NOT at all* in keeping with the filling of the Spirit by comparing Eph. 5:18-20 with Col. 3:16, 17.

The erroneous concept being taught concerning the work of the Holy Spirit during the closing days of the present dispensation results from a failure to understand that Acts 2:2-4 *CANNOT*, within a framework of sound exegesis, be understood as a norm for Christian experience today. This section of Scripture has to do with the Jewish people in connection with Joel’s prophecy.

This is a prophecy which has to do with the Spirit being poured out “upon all flesh” (Acts 2:16-21), referring to conditions which will be brought to pass in the camp of Israel (not in the world at large) during the Messianic Era (*cf.* Joel 2:28-32).

Joel’s prophecy *began to be fulfilled* in Acts chapter two, in connection with the opening message of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel; and had Israel followed Peter’s command to the nation in Acts 2:38, relative to the question asked in verse thirty-seven, *NOT ONLY* would the kingdom have been restored to Israel *BUT* there would have been *a complete fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy*.

Christ would have returned, the Messianic Era would have been ushered in, and the Spirit of God would have been poured out in accordance with Joel’s prophecy.

Although about three thousand responded to Peter’s command, the nation continued as before — unbelieving and unrepentant.

The offer of the kingdom then remained open to Israel for about twenty-nine additional years (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.).

And this is the reason why similar experiences relative to the work of the Holy Spirit can be found in other parts of the Book of Acts, covering events which occurred during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (*cf.* 4:8, 31; 9:17; 10:44-47; 13:9; 19:5, 6).

Once the re-offer of the kingdom was withdrawn though (about 62 A.D.), the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy was set aside.

This was followed shortly thereafter by the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and the subsequent scattering of the Jews throughout the Gentile world to await “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25).

Joel's prophecy *CANNOT* be fulfilled today, *even in part*. The present work of the Spirit among Christians, rather than being in accordance with that seen in Acts 2:2-4, *can ONLY* be in keeping with that which is taught in Eph. 5:18-20 and Col. 3:16, 17.

(The Greek word consistently used for the "filling" of the Spirit in Acts *is NOT* the same as the Greek word used for the "filling" of the Spirit in Ephesians [*pletho* and *pleroo* are used respectively]. Two different works of the Spirit are in view; and one of these two works, the one in Acts, *CANNOT* presently occur [though Satan can, and has, substituted a counterfeit].

For a discussion of the difference in how the words *pletho* and *pleroo* are used in the Greek New Testament, refer to Chapter III, pp. 44-47, in this book.

Also, for more information on "signs, wonders, and miracles," showing Satan's present-day counterfeiting work in this realm, refer to Appendix I in the author's book, *The Acts Period*.)

Thus, the counterfeit message and work of Satan pertaining to a present filling of the Spirit — which would, of necessity, involve supernatural power (the work of *spirits* [demons], *NOT the Spirit*) — exists because of a misinterpretation of Scripture. Those involved in what is called a "renewal" have been deceived by ministers of Satan (II Cor. 11:13-15) through their use (actually, misuse) of the Word of God. Resultingly, *an experience* has been substituted for *a reception of "the implanted word."*

Deception in this realm is *rampant* in certain quarters; and since there can be no victory over the heavenly principalities and powers apart from acquiring the extra portion of Oil, which a pseudo work of the Spirit *does NOT* provide at all, this would have to be looked upon as *one of the deadliest of all deceptions*.

A counterfeit work of this nature leaves the recipients in *EXACTLY* the same position as the ones seen in Matt. 7:21-23 — deceived by Satan's counterfeit to the extent that they believe the supernaturalism in which they have become involved is a work of the Lord performed through the power of the Spirit, *when NEITHER the Lord NOR the Spirit has had anything to do with these works* (ref. Appendix II in this book for comments on Matt. 7:21-23).

6

THE DOOR WAS SHUT

Open, NO Man Can Shut; Shut, NO Man Can Open

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:10-13).

The Lord places a premium on *His people watching and being prepared for His return.*

THIS is the crux of the message throughout the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse:

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:42, 44).

The day is coming when the “master of the house” *is going to rise up and close the door* (Luke 13:25). And when the Lord closes a door, an entirely new situation comes into existence:

The Lord “openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7).

WHEN the Lord opens a door, an opportunity exists for man to act in a specific realm; and NO man can shut that door.

However, *WHEN the Lord closes a door* which He had previously opened, man’s opportunity to act in a particular realm *ceases to exist; and NO man can reopen that door.*

The parable of the ten virgins is brought to a conclusion by *the Bridegroom closing a previously opened door*. The closed door separated those in possession of the extra portion of oil from those not in possession of this extra portion, allowing the prepared to come *inside* while leaving the unprepared on *the outside*.

The closed door separated those who had availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire that referenced by the extra portion of Oil — the filling of the Holy Spirit — from those who *had NOT* availed themselves of this opportunity.

As a result, *those allowed inside* had previously been able to overcome in the spiritual warfare (for they had possessed that which was necessary to overcome), and those left on *the outside* had previously been unable to overcome in the spiritual warfare (for they *had NOT* possessed that which was necessary to overcome [ref. Chapter V in this book]).

Thus, the closed door separated two groups of individuals, one from the other:

1) *Those granted the privilege* of attending and participating in the wedding festivities (those in possession of the extra portion of Oil, the filling of the Spirit, allowing them to have previously overcome in the spiritual warfare).

2) *Those denied this privilege* (those *NOT* in possession of the extra portion of Oil, the filling of the Spirit, which had left them in *NO* position to overcome).

The Bridegroom Came

The Bridegroom departed immediately preceding the beginning of the present dispensation. He ascended into heaven to “prepare a place” *in the Father’s house* for those who are to ascend the throne and reign as co-heirs with Him during the coming age.

His departure into heaven to perform a present work on behalf of His future co-heirs is in perfect keeping with God’s purpose for the entire present dispensation. And the whole of the matter, in turn, is in perfect keeping with the reason for man’s very existence, the purpose for man’s creation in the beginning.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2, 3).

At Christ’s first coming He paid the price for man’s redemption on Calvary’s cross. A change then occurred in God’s dispensational dealings with man. The house of Israel had previously been left desolate; and very near the beginning of that time (fifty-five days after Christ had left the house desolate [Matt. 23:38; 26:1, 2; Acts 2:1ff; cf. Lev. 23:15, 16]), God called into existence and began to deal with a new household which was neither Jewish nor Gentile.

Individuals redeemed on the basis of Christ’s sacrificial work at Calvary, from among both Jew and Gentile, formed an entirely new creation. This was the “one new man” in Christ, forming a new household within God’s dispensational dealings (cf. Matt. 23:38; 24:42-51; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15).

And Christ is presently in heaven performing a work on behalf of those within this household — preparing a place for them, which, first and foremost, would have to do with His work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, on behalf of Christians (cf. John 13:4-12; Heb. 4:14-16; I John 1:6-2:2).

The present dispensation and all events connected with this dispensation — beginning with the house of Israel being left desolate — result from Israel’s rejection of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 21:33-44).

Israel has been set aside while God removes from the Gentiles “a people for his name” *to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*

Those who were “not a people” *have NOW become* “the people of God” (Eph. 2:12; I Peter 2:10 [although believing Jews are included within this “one new man,” Gentiles are singled out in these verses because “the one new man” is taken mainly from among the Gentiles — from those who, before being removed from the Gentiles, had been “aliens...having no hope, and without God in the world”]).

God has reserved unto Himself two days, two thousand years, to deal with a new household in view of His Son’s coming rule from the heavens over the earth; and the Son’s present ministry

in heaven on behalf of those in this household is with the same end in view.

Christ's departure into heaven to "prepare a place" for His co-heirs *MUST* be looked upon as *a Divine work with a view to the Messianic Era* (though, in reality, everything in Scripture, save parts of the closing two and one-half chapters of Scripture [Rev. 20b-22], either moves toward or deals with this era).

The word "prepare" refers to *making ready for something out ahead*, which in this case, *could ONLY* have to do with preparations for the Messianic Era (cf. Matt. 3:3; Mark 14:15, 16). And in this respect, Christ is presently in heaven performing a present work for those who are to ascend the throne with Him *in THAT coming day*.

Preparing a place for Christians in John 14:2, 3 is often erroneously thought of in the sense of a present construction of the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem though is *a city within the Father's house which was brought into existence either prior to or during the days of Abraham* (Heb. 11:16), *NOT* the Father's house (note the expression "all things are ready" in Matt. 22:4, which refers to a time prior to the existence of the Church and would necessitate the new Jerusalem having been completed *at THAT time*).

God's house includes everything under His sovereign control, and *a place* is being prepared by Christ for Christians within the sphere of His control. The words "many mansions" (John 14:2, KJV) are somewhat misleading in this respect and should literally be translated "abiding places."

Christ is the appointed "heir of all things," and Christians are being invited to jointly realize this inheritance with Him (Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17). Christ will occupy His Own throne during that day, *and overcoming Christians will sit with Him on this throne* (Rev. 3:21).

These are the things which are in view in John 14:1-3. The "abiding places" which He has gone away to prepare are places with Him, positions with Him, in the coming kingdom.

These are *abiding places* within the Father's house, within the sphere of God's sovereign control of matters as they pertain to this earth; and in that coming day *ALL of this will be under the authority and control of the One Who has been appointed Heir, along with His co-heirs*.

Overcoming Christians will dwell in the new Jerusalem, but they will occupy their place in the kingdom with Christ, seated with Him upon His throne.

The Son's present preparatory work in heaven not only anticipates but it demands *His return to receive His servants* (the word "receive" in John 14:3 is a translation of the Greek word *paralambano*. The literal thought is "to receive alongside [as companions]." This is the same word translated "taken" in Matt. 24:40, 41 [ref. Chapter I in this book]).

Individuals are being saved today with a view to the coming kingdom; and Christ's present work, being performed on behalf of these individuals, is with the same end in view. It is with a view to receiving them alongside (as companions) to occupy the place He is presently preparing, making ready.

Though man may ignore Christ's return, put that event far from him, *Christ WILL one day return, just as He said. THEN, one door which is now open will be closed FOREVER.*

(Both the Spirit and the Son are presently performing works on behalf of Christians. And both are related works, having the same end in view, which will be realized during that future millennial day.

The Spirit is in the world performing a work having to do with His primary mission during the present dispensation — *the search for and acquisition of a bride for the Son* [Gen. 24:1ff]. And the Son is in heaven performing a work for *the bride whom the Spirit is acquiring* [John 13:4-12].

And the end of the matter is seen in the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.)

The Wedding Festivities

The word "marriage" (Matt. 25:10) should literally be understood as *marriage festivities* or *wedding festivities*. And festivities of this nature could either precede or follow the actual marriage.

Within the framework of that to which these festivities refer in Christendom (seen in Rev. 19:7-9), "the marriage" itself, as seen in the Book of Revelation, will still *be future at this time*.

Thus, the reference *can ONLY be to festivities preceding the marriage*.

The same is true in a previous parable, the parable of the King preparing festivities for the marriage of His Son, in Matt. 22:2-14 (another picture of the same thing seen in vv. 10-12 of the parable of the ten virgins). In this parable, preparations were made for the festivities, having to do with a banquet.

As previously seen, the festivities referenced in both of these parables (Matt. 22:2-14; 25:1-13) have to do with that seen in Rev. 19:7-9, “the marriage [marriage festivities] of the Lamb.” And the context of these festivities in the Book of Revelation clearly shows that these festivities will precede the actual marriage.

(The marriage of the Lamb itself is a legal transaction between the Father and His Son, and it will take place as a result of the judgments which will occur through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five — judgments which will be completed *ONLY AFTER* Christ returns and destroys Gentile world power.

The marriage festivities though occur in heaven immediately preceding Christ’s return.

Once all of the judgments seen through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass, *the marriage will have occurred*. The bride, at this point in time, *will have become the Lamb’s wife*.)

One should be careful at this point to avoid interpreting Scripture in the light of marriage customs in the Western World, or even at times in the East, during modern times. Marriage in the East during ancient times (and even in many instances during modern times) was performed through a legal transaction.

Examples of Eastern marriage customs in this respect can be seen in Jacob’s marriage to both Leah and Rachel and in Boaz’s marriage to Ruth.

Jacob contracted with Laban to work seven years for his daughter, Rachel. At the conclusion of the seven years, Rachel, within Jacob’s thinking, became his wife, for the terms of the contract had been fulfilled (Gen. 29:18-21).

A seven-day festival was then held (*cf.* vv. 22, 27), but at the end of the first evening of the festival Laban tricked Jacob by giving him Leah, the firstborn, rather than Rachel. And Jacob didn’t know until the next morning that he had been deceived.

Then, to acquire Rachel as his wife, for whom he had already worked seven years, he had to first fulfill Leah's week (that is, complete the week-long wedding festival) and then agree to serve Laban an additional seven years. Jacob fulfilled Leah's week, and Laban then gave him Rachel as his wife also with the understanding that he would work seven additional years (vv. 23-28).

Thus, the actual marriage ceremony is seen being performed two completely different ways in the passage (Gen. 29:20-30):

1) In Jacob's marriage to Leah, festivities followed the marriage contract being fulfilled (working seven years for Laban), with the marriage having occurred preceding the festivities.

2) In Jacob's subsequent marriage to Rachel (seven days later), festivities occurred before the marriage, with the marriage occurring before the marriage contract had been fulfilled (working seven additional years for Laban).

Then, in the Book of Ruth, Boaz married Ruth through fulfilling the requirements of a kinsman-redeemer. He redeemed a previously sold inheritance at the gate of Bethlehem, *which also involved taking Ruth as his wife to satisfy an Israeli law concerning widows.*

A nearer kinsman than Boaz was first afforded opportunity to redeem the inheritance, but since redemption also involved taking Ruth as his wife, he was unable to fulfill the part of a kinsman-redeemer. This left Boaz free to act in this capacity; and the marriage itself was performed within the legal, redemptive ceremony before ten elders at the gate of the city (Ruth 4:1ff).

Note that *the brides were NOT present* in either Jacob's two dealings with Laban or in Boaz's dealings with the elders at the gate of Bethlehem. The marriages in all three instances occurred through legal transactions which involved fulfilling certain requirements — *work* in Jacob's case, and *redemption of a piece of property* in Boaz's case.

With these things in mind, one should be able to clearly see that there is a sharp distinction in Scripture between *a marriage* on the one hand and *the wedding festivities* on the other.

Biblical typology clearly reveals that the actual marriage between Christ and His bride *will occur ONLY after He has redeemed the inheritance*, which, as seen in the Book of Revelation, is performed through the judgments brought to pass when all the seals of the seven-sealed scroll have been broken.

The marriage itself will be part of a fulfilled legal transaction between the Father and the Son. And that which is in view in Matt. 22:2-14; 25:10-12; Rev. 19:7-9 *can ONLY have to do with the wedding festivities* preceding the completion of all the legal requirements, preceding the completion of all the judgments which will occur through the breaking of the seals on the scroll (the title deed to the inheritance, the earth) — judgment which will be completed *ONLY after Christ returns and destroys Gentile world power, seen following the wedding festivities at the end of Revelation chapter nineteen.*

(For additional information on this subject, refer to Chapters VIII, IX, XIX, XXX in the author's book, *The Time of the End.*)

The wedding festivities attendant the marriage of God's Son to His bride occur in heaven *following* events at the judgment seat but *preceding* Christ's return to the earth with His angels at the end of the Tribulation. Decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat of Christ will reveal the identity of those privileged to enter into these festivities. And the festivities will occur immediately preceding Christ's return to complete His redemptive work having to do with the inheritance (a redemptive work, performed through judgment [through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll], which will bring the marriage to pass).

The parable of the ten virgins moves beyond the judgment seat into the festivities immediately preceding the marriage.

At that time *a door will be closed*. Individuals on one side of the door will be allowed to attend the festivities, while individuals on the other side will be denied admittance. *And once this door has been closed, those left on the outside will have missed the marriage festivities FOREVER. These festivities will occur ONCE, NEVER to be repeated.*

(The words "marriage" and "wedding" in Matt. 22:2-12; 25:10; Rev. 19:7, 9 are translations of the Greek word *gamos*. Sometimes in these

verses this word appears in a singular form, and other times it appears in a plural form. In either instance, contextually, the reference is always to festivities attendant the marriage, not to the marriage itself per se.

The singular form appears in Matt. 22:8, 10-12; Rev. 19:7, 9; and the plural form appears in Matt. 22:2-4, 9; 25:10.)

Afterward

Man is repeatedly warned in Scripture concerning the fact that *opportunities do NOT exist forever*. The “accepted time,” the “day of salvation,” is *TODAY*. *Man does NOT know* “what shall be on the morrow” (II Cor. 6:1, 2; James 4:13, 14).

Redeemed man has been commanded:

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate” (Luke 13:24a).

He is then warned:

“...for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:24b).

“Strive” is a translation of the word *agonizomai* in the Greek text. This is the same word used in I Cor. 9:25 (translated “striveth”) and is the Greek word from which we derive our English word “agonize.” The thought behind the use of this word is to strain every muscle as one seeks to accomplish the task at hand.

(An intensified form of this word appears in Jude 3 [*epagonizomai*] pertaining to *straining every muscle of one’s being in the present spiritual warfare as it relates to apostasy on the one hand and “the faith” on the other*.)

“The faith” is an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom in the New Testament.

Refer to Chapter II in the author’s book, *Jude*.)

In Luke 13:24 entrance through a strait gate is in view, while in I Cor. 9:25 running a race is in view.

The word “strait” refers to a narrow, constricted way, pointing to the difficulty involved in entering through the gate.

And the same thought permeates the race beginning in I Cor. 9:24. One has to do with a strait gate leading unto “life” (*cf.* Matt.

7:14), and the other with a race leading to “a crown.”

Both though point out ahead to the same thing — *life in the coming age, occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom.*

This is the matter which the rich, young ruler had in mind when he approached Jesus and asked:

“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16).

The words “eternal life” in the English text are misleading. The literal translation, derived from the context, should be “life for the age.” The rich, young ruler was *NOT* asking how he could receive eternal life; *NOR* did Jesus respond to his question in this respect.

The same accounts in Mark’s and Luke’s gospels clearly reveal that the rich, young ruler was thinking of *life in the coming kingdom (which was the message being proclaimed by Jesus and His disciples to the nation of Israel), NOT eternal life.*

Note Mark 10:17, 30 and Luke 18:18, 30. The question concerning obtaining life is asked; and Jesus, alluding to this question, refers to life in the “world [‘age’] to come,” *which of course has to do with the Messianic Era rather than eternal life.*

Further, the rich, young ruler was asking about *inheriting life* (Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18). Eternal life is *NOT* inherited. Rather, it is a *free gift*, which, unlike an inheritance, *CANNOT* be forfeited.

The *ONLY* type life in Scripture associated with an inheritance is *life in the coming kingdom.*

Jesus said that “a rich man shall hardly [‘with difficulty’] enter into the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt. 19:23). There’s *NOTHING* whatsoever “difficult” about receiving eternal life; *NOR* is “striving” involved. Eternal life, a *free gift*, is something which the rich and the poor alike can acquire by simply reaching out and taking.

It would be *completely out of character* with the gospel of grace to say *that it is more difficult for a rich man to be saved than it is for any other type individual.* Entrance into the kingdom though (“the kingdom of the heavens,” the coming rule of the heavens over the earth) is something altogether different. *Discipleship* is involved (cf. Luke 14:26, 27; John 8:31; 15:8), and riches can become a great hindrance in this realm (Matt. 13:22).

(There is actually no word for “eternity” in the Greek language of the New Testament. The Greeks thought in the sense of “ages” [aeons of time], and eternity for them was an endless succession of aeons.

Aionios is the Greek word normally translated “eternal” in English versions of Scripture [this was the word used by the rich, young ruler in Matt. 19:16]. *Aionios* is the adjective equivalent of the noun *aion* [meaning, ‘period of time,’ ‘age’], which is used innumerable times in the New Testament, often translated “world” [cf. Matt. 12:32; 13:22, 49; Heb. 1:2; Heb. 13:8; a plural form of the word is used in the last two references].

Mark 10:30 provides an example of both *aion* and *aionios* used together: “...and in the world [*aion*] to come eternal [*aionios*] life.” Clearly, from both the text and context, “eternal life” CANNOT be in view.

On the other hand, *aionios* is used at times in the New Testament in the sense of “eternal.” This use though is derived from textual considerations, not from the meaning of the word itself.

Aionios, for example, is the word used in John 3:16, where the type life referenced could only be “eternal life” [cf. vv. 17, 18], derived through *faith in Christ*.)

The Lord in Luke 13:24 refers to individuals who will seek to “enter in at the strait gate” and will be unable to so do.

The reason for this is explained in the verse which follows (v. 25), and both verses together constitute one of the best parallel passages in Scripture on the parable of the ten virgins.

Individuals are commanded to exert every effort, strain every muscle of their being, in an effort to enter (into life) through the narrow, constricted way while the door is still open. The day is coming, *on the morrow, when the door will be FOREVER closed; and at that time such an opportunity will NO longer exist.*

There is *NO such thing* today as a Christian seeking to run the race or enter in at the strait gate and being unable to achieve the goal. *The door is presently open, and the Lord does NOT command His people to accomplish tasks which they CANNOT accomplish.*

However, the day is coming when *the Master of the house will rise up and close the door* (v. 25); and once that door has been closed, *there will then be NO such thing* as a Christian ever running the race or entering in at the strait gate. *The day of opportunity for man to act in this realm will be PAST, NEVER to be repeated.*

I Know You Not

The Lord is *omniscient*. *He knows EVERYONE and EVERYTHING.*

Yet, in the parable of the ten virgins, the Lord plainly declared that *He did NOT know those on the outside of the closed door seeking admittance to the wedding festivities.*

A similar statement is recorded in Matt. 7:21-23. Here the Lord declared that certain individuals will appear in His presence “in that day” who will seek admittance into the kingdom of the heavens on the basis of an intimate association with Him through their previously performed miraculous works.

The Lord though will say:

“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [‘lawlessness’]” (v. 23; *ref.* Appendix II in this book).

“That day” is the time when those presently commanded to enter in at “the strait gate” appear before the Lord in judgment, with a view to entrance into the kingdom (*cf.* vv. 13, 14, 21, 22); and as evident from both the text and the context, the scene depicted in Matt. 7:21-23 has to do with Christians before the judgment seat.

It is evident from the text that “many” are going to appear before the Lord “in that day” who had sought to enter in at the strait gate through a pseudo-intimate association with the Lord.

In that day it will be revealed that they had become involved in miraculous works, supposedly performed in the Lord’s name; but the Lord will reveal to them that *He had NOTHING to do with these works.*

The Lord’s statements, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23) and “I know you not” (Matt. 25:12) would have to be looked upon as *relative statements* — *relative to the matter at hand*. (Actually, since the Lord is omniscient, He *could NOT* make such a statement to anyone without it being *relative*.)

To *the unsaved*, it would be relative to eternal life; to *the saved*, it would be relative to matters having to do with the kingdom.)

In Matt. 7:23, the Lord’s negative response pertains to two things:

- 1) Entrance into the kingdom (vv. 21, 23).
- 2) Miraculous works (v. 22).

The Lord will state that *He had NOTHING to do with these works*, and He will refuse to recognize those involved in such works *relative to entrance into the kingdom*. Through these works, they, in actuality, will have entered in at the wide gate, the broad way (v. 14); and a revelation of this fact, in the Lord's presence, will result in their being denied a position with Him in the kingdom.

In Matt. 25:12 the Lord's statement *pertains to the unpreparedness of the five foolish virgins, with the wedding festivities in view*. The foolish virgins were *NOT properly prepared* to attend these festivities.

Comparing the parable of the ten virgins with the parable of the wedding feast in Matt. 22:2-14, *an absence of the extra supply of oil* shows unpreparedness in one while *an absence of the wedding garment* shows unpreparedness in the other.

The connection is evident. A Christian *NOT filled with the Holy Spirit*, depicted by the five foolish virgins without the extra portion of Oil, is in *NO* position to perform righteous acts (works) which make up the wedding garment.

Thus, different facets of the same truth are taught in both parables. The absence of that depicted by the extra portion of Oil *will result* in Christians appearing before the Lord improperly clothed. They *will NOT possess wedding garments, appearing naked* in the Lord's presence (cf. Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 3:18; 19:7-9).

Consequently, because of their improper dress, *the Lord will NOT know them relative to entrance into the wedding festivities*.

The words for "know" in the Greek text of Matt. 7:23 and Matt. 25:12 are interestingly different. *Ginosko*, pointing to one type knowledge, is used in Matt. 7:23; and *oida*, pointing to another type knowledge, is used in Matt. 25:12.

Ginosko refers to *a type knowledge gained through experience*. *That is, one has an intimate relationship with Christ through the experience of following Him, keeping His commandments* (as in I John 2:3, 4).

This is the word Paul used in Phil. 3:10:

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..."

The end result of such knowledge, such a relationship with Christ, would be attaining “unto the resurrection [out-resurrection] of the dead” (v. 11).

Oida, on the other hand, refers to a *type knowledge gained apart from experience, an absolute knowledge*. This is the type knowledge we possess concerning various facts set forth in Scripture:

“...we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2)

“...believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...” (1 John 5:13).

In Matt. 7:23, Christ’s use of the word *ginosko* clearly reveals His nonassociation with the miraculous works which had been performed. Those performing these works had been carrying on activities completely outside the sphere of any type intimate relationship with Christ, though claiming such a relationship.

Thus, responding to their question (which expects a positive response the way it is worded in the Greek text [they actually thought these miraculous works were being performed through the power of the Holy Spirit, in Christ’s name]), Christ was very careful to show, by the use of the word *ginosko*, that He had *absolutely NOTHING to do with these works*.

Today, near the close of the present dispensation, the same segment of Christendom manifesting miraculous works (such as those seen in Matt. 7:22) is also proclaiming a counterfeit message relative to the filling of the Holy Spirit, possessing the extra supply of Oil (*ref.* Chapter V in this book). In fact, this counterfeit work of the Holy Spirit is *the heart of their message*.

The entire matter *can ONLY* be a work of Satan within the Laodicean state of Christendom at the conclusion of the present dispensation, producing further corruption and deterioration. It is an end result of the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal very early in the dispensation (Matt. 13:33).

Deceived Christians caught up in this work of Satan are becoming involved in a manifestation of supernatural powers

emanating from the demonic world, believing that these things are being done through the power of the Holy Spirit and are of the Lord. They are further being deceived into receiving a pseudo spiritual work in their lives, leaving them with a pseudo preparation for the spiritual warfare at hand; and Christians becoming involved in this activity can only experience *present defeat* (Satan cannot cast himself out, he cannot defeat himself in the spiritual warfare [Matt. 12:26]) and *future rejection* ("I never knew you").

Thus, Jesus in His choice of words in Matt. 7:23 was very careful to show that *there was NO intimate relationship on His part with the ones performing these miraculous works*.

His statement in Matt. 25:12 though is different. The use of the word *oida* rather than *ginosko* reveals knowledge of a fact apart from any reference to experience. Though experiential knowledge would have been involved through acquiring the extra portion of Oil, there is *NO claim* made by those outside the door to such an experience (as in Matt. 7:21-23). Thus, the Lord deemed the simple, absolute statement as given to be the proper response to those requesting that the door be opened.

The door was shut, and the Bridegroom did NOT recognize those on the other side of the door as belonging to the group allowed to attend the marriage festivities.

They were thus left in a place described in the closing parable of the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse as the "outer darkness" (25:30; cf. Matt. 22:11-13).

That is, they were denied entrance into the lighted banqueting hall where the festivities were being held and were left in a place of darkness on the outside, with *closed doors* separating the two places ("outer darkness" is discussed in Chapter XII of this book).

Watch Therefore

In I Thess. 5:6-10, Christians are spoken of as occupying one of two positions:

Christians either "watch" or they, like the world, "sleep."

Watching is associated with the "day," being "sober," and being properly equipped for the warfare at hand (v. 8).

Sleeping, on the other hand, is associated with the “night” and “drunkenness,” wherein there is no proper preparation for the warfare (v. 7).

In His message to the Church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6), Christ said, “If...thou shalt not *watch*, I will come on thee as a *thief*...” (v. 3).

There is *NOTHING* good revealed in Scripture about the appearance of a thief. Removal or destruction of property and even death follow in his wake (John 10:10), which illustrates *EXACTLY* what lies ahead for unfaithful Christians to whom Christ will one day appear after this fashion (cf. Luke 19:24; James 5:19, 20).

The writer of Hebrews stated:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:27, 28).

The preceding two verses parallel one another. The appointment with death (v. 27) parallels Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary (v. 28); and the coming judgment of Christians (v. 27) parallels the thought of looking for Christ and a salvation accompanying His return (v. 28).

Christians have already kept the appointment with death (v. 27). It is a vicarious death. Christ has kept the appointment in their stead. He has died in their place.

Then, at the judgment seat of Christ (v. 27), all things will be revealed.

Those who watched, looked for Christ (v. 28), will realize the salvation of their souls.

Those though who didn’t watch, look for Him, will suffer the loss of their souls (this is the salvation in view throughout Hebrews, *NOT* the salvation which we presently possess).

The exhortation is to “*Watch*,” and it is accompanied by a *warning*.

The Lord will return at an unexpected time, and *servants NOT watching will “suffer loss” and occupy a place with the unfaithful outside closed doors.*

7

TO RECEIVE A KINGDOM

Introduced in Genesis, Realized in Revelation

“For the kingdom of the heavens is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods (Matt. 25:14).

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12).

The parable of the talents presents an overall scope of the present dispensation, with a particular emphasis on events surrounding the Lord’s return and the kingdom which follows. This parable covers events extending from the time of Christ’s first coming to the time of His return and is one of the most comprehensive parables in Scripture dealing with the purpose for and scope of the present dispensation.

The parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-27 are *essentially the same, though certain internal differences exist.*

Jesus gave the parable of the pounds to His disciples in a single discourse near the close of His earthly ministry while still in Jericho, before going up to Jerusalem. He gave the parable at this time in order to dispel thoughts which His disciples had concerning the kingdom being established in days immediately ahead (Luke 19:11ff).

And the parable of the talents was given to His disciples in a larger discourse after they had been to Jerusalem in order to provide additional light upon the accompanying three parables.

The parable of the pounds was given *preceding Christ’s entry into Jerusalem as the nation’s King, anticipating His rejection.*

And the parable of the talents was given *following His entry and rejection*, only two days before the Jewish people crucified their Messiah (Matt. 26:1, 2).

The overall framework of the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is *the same*.

A Nobleman (Christ) called His servants (Christians), delivered unto them His goods (His business), and commissioned them concerning the use of these goods.

He then departed into a far country to receive a kingdom (into heaven to receive the kingdom presently in possession of the incumbent ruler, Satan), leaving His servants with the promise that He would return (as King, in possession of the kingdom).

During the interim, between the time of the Nobleman's departure and return, His servants were to exercise faithfulness to the responsibility with which they had been entrusted.

Then the day finally arrived when the Nobleman returned, as He had promised. And, at that time, His servants were called before Him to give an account.

Those servants who had exercised faithfulness in their calling were commended and then rewarded by being placed in positions of power and authority in the kingdom which the Nobleman had acquired during the time of His absence.

Those servants exercising unfaithfulness in their calling though experienced rebuke, rejection, and chastisement. NO positions in the Nobleman's kingdom awaited them.

The main difference in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is the manner in which the Nobleman delivered His goods to His servants prior to His departure.

In the parable of the talents, these goods were delivered to individual servants on the basis of their ability. Some servants received more talents than other servants, though every servant received at least one talent (Matt. 25:14, 15).

In the parable of the pounds though, each servant received an identical amount. There were ten servants and ten pounds, and each servant received one pound (Luke 19:13; cf. vv. 16-20).

"The talents" and "the pounds" have to do with *monetary units of exchange*.

The reference is to weighed amounts of precious metals such as gold or silver. Coins of varying sizes would be one form of either.

The household servants were left in possession of the Noble-

man's wealth; and they were to use this wealth in carrying out their Master's commission during the time of His absence, anticipating that day when He would return, having received the kingdom.

Just As, Even As

In the Greek text, the parable of the talents begins with the words *Hosper gar*.

Hosper is an adverb used as a connecting particle, and *gar* is a postpositive conjunction. When brought over into the English text, *gar* would precede *hosper* in the translation, as shown in the KJV text: "For [*Gar*] *the kingdom of heaven is as [hosper]...*" (v. 14).

Note that the words "the kingdom of heaven is" are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek text. These are words supplied by the translators, undoubtedly attempting to convey the thought expressed by the word *hosper* in order to help the reader better understand the subject matter of the text about to follow.

This particle, which could be better translated "just as," or "even as," connects that which follows with that which precedes. It connects the parable of the talents with the parable of the ten virgins.

The parable of the talents is "just as" the parable of the ten virgins. Both deal with the same thing. They form different facets of the same subject matter.

Since the parable of the ten virgins opened with "Then shall 'the kingdom of heaven'..." (v. 1), the translators, apparently on the basis of the thought conveyed by *hosper* (v. 14), attempting to show the inseparable connection between the two parables, used these same words to open the parable of the talents.

A better translation to adequately bring out the force of *Hosper gar* would be, "For it is just as..." "It" would refer back to the preceding parable, with attention called to the parable which is about to follow being "just as" the parable which has preceded.

Thus, a study of the parable of the talents will provide additional light on the parable of the ten virgins.

Something often overlooked in the parable of the ten virgins is the fact that this parable, "*just as*" the parable of the talents, has to do with a Householder and servants in the house.

Note that the parable of the ten virgins continues the thought from the parable of the Householder and His servant (24:45-51), which is itself a continuation of the thought from the immediately preceding parable concerning a house being broken up (vv. 40-44).

In the parable of the ten virgins, the Householder is referred to as the Bridegroom, revealing another facet of Biblical teaching concerning the Master of the house — a facet of truth pertaining to the necessity of the Nobleman possessing a wife when He takes the kingdom and reigns (*cf.* Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24).

In the parable of the Householder and His servant and the parable of the ten virgins, the Master of the house is presented simply as absent, followed by His coming.

There is *NOTHING* directly recorded about His one-time presence and departure, as in the parable of the talents. Such a previous presence and departure though *MUST* be understood, for in the parable of the Householder and His servant the Master of the house had previously placed His servant in charge of the house and commissioned him concerning responsibilities in the house (v. 45). The Householder's "coming" (v. 46) would thus be *His return*, as in the parable of the talents (v. 19).

The *SAME* is true in the parable of the ten virgins. The Bridegroom, Who is *the Householder* from the previous parable, or *the Man* in the following parable, is absent.

He had previously been present with His servants (the ten virgins); but He departed into the far country, and His servants were to conduct their activities during His time of absence after a manner which would *NOT ONLY* be in keeping with that which He had commanded prior to His departure *BUT*, as well, after a manner which would be in keeping with their faithfully awaiting and anticipating His return (*cf.* Heb. 9:28).

The parable of the ten virgins presents proper preparation for going forth to meet the Bridegroom (proper preparation as one anticipates and awaits the Bridegroom's return).

Possessing the extra portion of Oil, being filled with the Holy Spirit, is the CENTRAL issue at hand.

The CENTRAL issue in the parable of the talents though is faithfulness to the Householder's charge concerning the proper use of His goods

during His time of absence. *NOTHING* is stated about the filling of the Spirit, as in the previous parable.

These two parables teach two facets of a central truth:

Properly carrying out responsibility requires proper preparation.

That is, a proper use of the Master's goods during the time of His absence *necessitates that one be properly prepared.*

In this respect, *being filled with the Spirit (as in the parable of the ten virgins) and being busy about the Lord's business (as in the parable of the talents) go hand-in-hand.*

The *ONLY* Christians really in a position to carry on the Lord's business in its fullness *are those filled with the Spirit.*

Thus, the sequence of the parables themselves is significant.

God has given His Word and the Holy Spirit to Christians *in order to properly equip them for NOT ONLY the battle at hand BUT also the task at hand.* Adherence to the command, "...be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18, *MUST* precede one's faithful fulfillment of the command, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

The parable of the ten virgins (apart from the parable of the talents) actually though moves beyond the thought of being filled with the Spirit and reveals *a purpose for this filling.*

This parable reveals activity among the Householder's servants, in complete accord with the same thing seen in the succeeding parable of the talents. Such is revealed by *the ten virgins going forth with their lamps burning.* But *ONLY* the five virgins in possession of the extra supply of Oil were in *a position to carry out such activity in the light of the Bridegroom's return* (ref. Chapter V in this book).

And in relation to such activity, both parables deal with faithful and unfaithful servants. There are five wise virgins and five foolish virgins in one parable, and there are two faithful servants and one unfaithful servant in the other parable, which is in perfect keeping with that seen in the opening two parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.

It is within a framework of faithfulness to the Householder's charge to His servants concerning activity during His time of absence (which involves the servants being properly prepared), along with that which occurs when the Householder returns, *that the parable of the talents is "just as" the parable of the ten virgins.*

Reason for Departure

The Nobleman, Christ, revealed His approaching departure to His disciples on more than one occasion (cf. Mark 2:19, 20; Luke 5:34, 35; 19:12; John 14:2, 3).

In accord with Old Testament prophecy, He was to return to the place from whence he had come (back to heaven) and remain there for a specified period of time (2,000 years). This was occasioned by the people of Israel rejecting and crucifying their Messiah.

At His first coming, Christ:

“...came unto his own [‘own things’ (neuter pl. in the Gk. text)], and his own [‘own people’ (masculine pl. in the Gk. text)] received him not” (John 1:11).

“His own things” refer to *those things which were rightfully His: the Davidic throne, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.*; and “His own people” refer to *the Jewish people, His brethren according to the flesh.*

Christ suffered at the hands of His Own people *because of His Own things*, things which rightfully belonged to Him.

ALL the sufferings of Christ, after some fashion, were associated with the “things” to which He came, by the people to whom He came.

1) Rejection by His Own

Jesus was born “King of the Jews,” He presented Himself to Israel as the nation’s “King” (Matt. 2:2; 21:1-11), and over His head at the time of His death the accusation read:

“This is Jesus the King of the Jews” (Matt. 27:37b).

His Kingship was at the center of the accusation which the Jews presented when they took Jesus to Pilate:

“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King” (Luke 23:2).

Pilate, after questioning Jesus and listening to what He had to say relative to this accusation, responded:

"So You are a king?" (John 18:37a, NASB).

Jesus, in response, said:

"You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world..." (John 18:37b, NASB).

Jesus though had clearly stated to Pilate that His kingdom was *NOT* "of this world," referring to the present world system under Satan; and from this statement Pilate apparently understood that even though a King other than Caesar may have been present, He posed no threat to the Roman Empire, which was "of this world."

Thus, Pilate found "in him no fault at all" (John 18:36-38).

Pilate brought Jesus forth to the Jewish people as "the King of the Jews," seeking to release Him. The people though cried out for the release of Barabbas, an imprisoned robber and murderer, rather than Jesus. Pilate then released Barabbas and scourged Jesus (John 18:39, 40; cf. Matt. 27:26).

The Roman soldiers were then allowed to array Christ as a mock King, and Pilate, in this fashion, presented Christ once again to the Jewish people with the words:

"Behold the man [the man arrayed in this ignominious fashion (a crown of thorns and a purple robe) as the King of the Jews]!" (John 19:5).

The religious leaders of Israel, seeing Christ arrayed in this mock fashion as their King, then cried out for His crucifixion. Pilate though continued to seek His release (John 19:6ff); and after another conversation with Christ, Pilate brought Him forth to the Jewish people again, with the words:

"Behold your King!" (John 19:14b).

The Jewish people though continued to cry out for His crucifixion. This prompted the question by Pilate:

"Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15a).

The chief priests responded:

"We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15b).

Their response placed Pilate in the position of having little choice but to acquiesce to their demand (*cf.* v. 12); and Pilate, though having tried to wash his hands of the matter, delivered Jesus over to be crucified (Matt. 27:24ff; John 19:16ff).

With the words, "We have no king but Caesar," the Jewish people sank to a *new low* in their long history.

They had rejected their King, they were crying out for His crucifixion; and, to effect His death after this fashion, *they were claiming allegiance to Caesar, a pagan Gentile king.*

God Himself, in the person of His Son, stood rejected in their midst. *NOT ONLY* had He been rejected, *BUT* the people were crying for His execution by crucifixion. They wanted the Man Pilate had brought forth as their King subjected to the most ignominious form of execution known to man.

Crucifixion was reserved for the worst types of slaves or criminals in the Roman world; and, because of Deut. 21:23, it was considered by the Jews as the most horrible of all forms of death:

"...he that is hanged is accursed of God."

When the Chief Priests claimed allegiance to Caesar in order to effect Christ's crucifixion, they *could NOT* have placed Israel in a position more diametrically opposed to God's purpose for calling the nation into existence.

Israel was (and remains today) *God's firstborn son*, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture (Ex. 4:12).

Israel had been called into existence to be the nation which would *NOT ONLY* rule over the Gentile nations *BUT* also reach these same nations with God's message, resulting in the nations being blessed.

Israel was to occupy this position within a theocracy.

This was the purpose for the existence of the theocracy in the Old Testament; and this was a purpose which would have been realized had Israel *NOT* rejected Christ at His first coming, delaying the realization of this purpose *UNTIL the time of His return.*

The people of Israel though had turned the whole thing around by rejecting their Messiah and placing themselves in subjection to Caesar.

There could be *NO* theocracy apart from their rejected Messiah; and those who were supposed to rule in the theocracy were *NOT ONLY* calling for Christ's crucifixion *BUT* they were subjecting themselves to the pagan ruler of the very people over which they were called into existence to rule.

2) A House Left Desolate

The pronouncement concerning Israel's desolation had been made immediately prior to Christ's crucifixion, and the entire matter of that which was about to occur had been graphically outlined eight centuries earlier by the prophet Hosea:

"When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 5:13-6:2).

The name "Ephraim" is used to collectively represent *the entire nation of Israel* (Jer. 31:9).

Ephraim in this passage is sick, wounded, and goes to the Assyrian for help (also referred to as "king Jareb," a figurative title of *the King of Assyria*).

However, the Assyrian is unable to effect a cure (v. 13).

"The Assyrian," as evident from the verses immediately following, refers to *the final subjugator of the nation of Israel* who will appear during the Tribulation.

The reference is to *Antichrist* who will arise out of a country within the territory covered by the northern segment of the old Babylonian kingdom after its four-way division following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. (Dan. 8:8, 9).

This segment of the kingdom was Assyria, and because of this the Antichrist is referred to as *an Assyrian* several places in Old Testament Scripture (cf. Isa. 10:5; 14:25; Micah 5:5). Also note in a basic Old Testament type covering the matter that the Pharaoh of Egypt during Moses' day was *an Assyrian* (Isa. 52:4).

(The Assyrians during Moses' day had previously come down and conquered the Egyptians [just as the Assyrian yet future will conquer the world]. And the Assyrians at this time were ruling Egypt [just as the Assyrian yet future will rule the world].)

Ephraim's *ONLY* help could come from the One Who had wrought the sickness, caused the wound.

It was the Lord Who had placed Ephraim in this condition. It was the Lord Who had left the house desolate.

And the final subjugator of Israel, rather than helping, will only produce a further desolation (Dan. 9:26, 27). He will be "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 12:11), bringing an already desolated house into a ravaged condition without parallel in history.

The Lord said, "I will take away, and none shall rescue him" (v. 14). Only the One Who placed Ephraim in this condition can effect deliverance.

Christ is *the One* Who pronounced desolation upon the house of Israel, and He is *the ONLY One* Who can remove Israel from this condition. Apart from the One Whom the nation rejected and crucified, Israel has *NO* hope. Apart from their Messiah, the people of Israel will remain in their present desolate condition *FOREVER*.

Deliverance though is coming, but two things MUST transpire FIRST:

1) The One Who had come, been rejected, and caused Ephraim's sickness *MUST* return to the place from whence He came ("I, even I, will tear [cause the sickness] and go away [return to heaven]"; "I will go and return to my place").

2) The people of Israel *MUST* then acknowledge their offense (their centuries of disobedience and harlotry was climaxed at Christ's first coming by the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah) and seek The Lord's face (vv. 14, 15).

(Note that Israel at Christ's first coming was already sick, as depicted centuries earlier in the first chapter of Isaiah [vv. 4ff].

And Christ, leaving the house desolate, brought this existing sickness to a new level, an intensity not heretofore existing.)

Christ has returned to heaven. He returned forty days following His resurrection, and He is going to remain in heaven *UNTIL* those who offended Him acknowledge their offense and seek His face.

The time when they will seek His face will be during "their affliction," the coming Great Tribulation (v. 15).

Though the Jewish people will call upon the Lord and seek His face prior to His return (brought about by their having *NO place to turn* other than to the Lord during the Tribulation), they will *NOT* actually acknowledge their offense *UNTIL* after He returns.

Israel's offence reached an apex and was climaxed in *His presence*, and the nation's offence, as well, will be acknowledged in *His presence* (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 3:6-8; Gen. 44:16-45:3).

The SAME scenes which witnessed events surrounding the beginning of Israel's desolation will ALSO witness events surrounding the end of Israel's desolation. The SAME scenes which witnessed Messiah's sufferings and humiliation will ALSO witness His glory and exaltation.

The Jewish people, during the time of the coming Great Tribulation, are going to seek the Lord "early" (v. 15). Under the reign of Antichrist, because of the worldwide anti-Semitism which will exist, conditions will deteriorate into a chaotic state unparalleled in the history of the human race. Conditions will become such that apart from the Lord's intervention, man would literally destroy himself (Matt. 24:21, 22).

It will be during these days that the Israelites, as the Israelites in the brickyards and fields of Egypt under the reign of the Assyrian during Moses' day (Ex. 2:23), are going to turn to and call upon the Lord.

And the Lord, as during Moses' day, is going to *hear His people, remember His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and have respect unto them* (Ex. 2:24, 25).

These things will occur "after two days," after two thousand years. It will be "in the third day," in the third one-thousand-year

period, that Israel will be raised up to live in the Lord's sight (*cf.* Hosea 6:2; II Peter 3:8).

The time designated by the two days covers, *NOT* the present dispensation (the two-day, the 2,000-year, Christian dispensation), *BUT* the past Jewish dispensation (the two days, the 2,000 years, extending from the birth of Abraham to the kingdom, with seven years yet to transpire).

(Note that the restoration of Israel and the restoration of the theocracy to Israel occur at the end of the Jewish dispensation [Dan. 9:24-27].

God stopped the clock [so to speak] counting time during the Jewish dispensation seven years short of completion and began to work with an entirely separate group of household servants [which are neither Jewish nor Gentile] for a dispensation — the present dispensation.

Once God has completed His work among this separate group of household servants, He will remove them from the earth and deal with them in relation to *past faithfulness, with a view to the future theocracy.*

Once this has been done, God will then turn back to Israel and complete the last seven years of the Jewish dispensation, with the kingdom being ushered in following the completion of these final seven years.)

Thus, Christ will remain in heaven *UNTIL* the full two days of the Jewish dispensation, the full two thousand years, have transpired; and at the end of this time He will return.

THEN, on the third day, the third one-thousand-year period, Israel is going to be raised up to occupy her proper place in the Lord's sight.

That is, at the end of two days, two thousand years (time in which God deals with the Jewish people [seven years required to complete the two days, the 2,000 years, are still future]), Israel is going to finally realize the reason for the nation's inception during the days of Moses almost 3,500 years ago.

Purpose for Departure

Hosea 5:13-6:2 deals with *the reason* rather than *the purpose* for Christ's departure almost two millennia ago. *The purpose* for His departure is dealt with in other Old Testament passages.

Moses, for example, went to his brethren as their deliverer, but he was rejected. He then departed into and dwelt in the land of Midian, the far country, and remained there as a shepherd for a lengthy period of time. And prior to the day God called him to return to his brethren, he took a Gentile bride (Ex. 2:11-3:10).

Moses in Midian, between the time of his departure and return, typifies Christ in heaven, between the time of His departure and return. And as Moses was a shepherd, so is Christ a Shepherd, the Great Shepherd of the sheep; and as Moses took a Gentile bride during this time, so is Christ presently taking a Gentile bride.

This same truth can be seen in the experiences of Joseph. He went to his brethren, was rejected by his brethren, and was sold by his brethren for the price of a slave. He then found himself removed from his brethren, in Egypt, in the far country. And while in Egypt, prior to the time he was reunited with his brethren, he took a Gentile bride (Gen. 37-45).

The same truth is also set forth, though after a slightly different fashion, in the experiences of Isaac. Sarah, his mother, had died; and Abraham, his father, sent his eldest servant into Mesopotamia, to his own people, to acquire a bride for Isaac. And after the servant had completed his mission, acquiring the bride, Abraham remarried (Gen. 23-25).

This points to God sending the Holy Spirit into the world (ch. 24) following the setting aside of Israel (ch. 23) in order to acquire a bride for His Son (after Christ's return to heaven).

And, as in the type, the bride is being taken from among God's Own people (which cannot be from Israel, for the house of Israel lies desolate during this time; or Israel during this time is looked upon as Sarah [Gen. 23] and Lazarus [John 11] — *dead*).

The restoration of Israel will occur, as in the type, *AFTER* the bride has been acquired for God's Son (Gen. 25:1ff), *AFTER two days* (John 11:6, 7).

1) A Necessary Interval

Israel, at Christ's first coming, rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens. The nation of Israel, *a people in possession of both earthly and heavenly promises and blessings, though they had experi-*

entially known *ONLY* the earthly, rejected the heavenly. They spurned the offer to occupy positions in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom; and once the house was left desolate, it was necessary for God to call a new people into existence to be the recipient of this offer.

And this is *EXACTLY* what has occurred. This is the reason for the existence of the “one new man” in Christ, who is neither Jew nor Gentile (cf. Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:14, 15).

The purpose for Christ’s departure into heaven, as brought out in the parable of the pounds, is *to receive a kingdom from His Father* (Luke 19:12).

A kingdom though, as also brought out in the parable of the pounds, necessitates *rulers to govern affairs in the realm covered by the kingdom* (Luke 19:16-19). And God is presently taking two days, two millenniums (the present dispensation, while the house of Israel lies desolate), to call out these rulers.

(Note in connection with Christ going into heaven to receive a kingdom — while the Holy Spirit is presently in the world calling out the future rulers in the kingdom [synonymous with His search for a bride for God’s Son] — He, prior to receiving the kingdom, is presently performing a work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of His prospective co-heirs, His prospective bride.

For additional information on this subject, refer to Chapters IV and VI in this book, pp. 60-62, under the sub-heading, “Wash Thyself,” and pp. 84-87, under the heading, “The Bridegroom Came.”)

The rulers whom God is presently calling out will reign as co-regents with Christ, as His bride, His consort queen.

And as in the type set forth in Genesis chapter twenty-four, *the bride is being taken from among His Own people*. God has sent the Holy Spirit to this earth to acquire *a bride for His Son from among Christians, His Own people, who “in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God”* (I Peter 2:10).

As in the original type, Eve was removed from Adam’s body to reign with him as consort queen (Gen. 1:28; 2:21, 22).

Eve was NOT all of Adam’s body, ONLY a small part; and this SAME relationship between body and bride MUST exist relative to the bride being called out for the Second Man, the Last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-50).

That which is true of the type is also true of the antitype, and conversely; One is an exact replica of the other. The bride of Christ WILL be, the bride of Christ MUST be, the body of Christ in the SAME sense that Eve was the body of Adam.

Eve was bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23); Eve was the body of Adam, but she was NOT all of his body.

ALL of the saved during the present dispensation form the body, BUT NOT ALL of the saved will form the bride. As in the type of Eve or Rebekah, the bride will be removed from the body, from the saved, from among the Lord's Own people.

This same truth is also taught in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds. *NOT ALL* of the servants in these parables occupied positions of power and authority when their Master returned, having received the kingdom. Positions of this nature were reserved for *the faithful*.

That is to say, *NOT ALL* Christians will occupy positions with Christ when He returns, having received the kingdom. Positions of this nature, as co-heirs with Him, seated on the throne as consort queen, *are reserved for the faithful*.

2) A Necessary Departure

"The kingdom of the world," presently in possession and control of Satan and his angels, will one day *become* "the kingdom of our Lord" (Rev. 11:15, ASV). This kingdom though is part of a realm ruled by a far greater Power than the incumbent powers and authorities. It is a province within the kingdom of God, a kingdom covering the entire universe.

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19; cf. I Chron. 19:11, 12).

Christ returning to heaven to receive the kingdom from His Father returns to the One in possession and control of everything in the entire universe.

Satan presently holds possession and control of a province "under" *God's absolute, sovereign possession and control*, though he has disqualified himself; and he will continue to hold his present position until Christ receives the kingdom from His Father, for a

principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler *MUST* hold his position until he is actually replaced.

But God *will NOT* allow conditions as they currently exist to continue in a part of His kingdom indefinitely.

God has told His Son:

“Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1).

God is awaiting that day when the present powers and authorities are put down and the Son receives possession and control of the kingdom (Ps. 110:2ff).

The reception of the kingdom from the Father and the accompanying transfer of power and authority are recorded in Dan. 7:9-14:

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [‘were placed’], and the Ancient of days did sit...

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (vv. 9a, 13, 14).

It will be *in THAT coming day* that Christ and His co-heirs, presently being called out, *will ascend the throne, possess the kingdom, and rule the earth with “a rod of iron.”*

Or, to state matters another way, it will be *in THAT coming day* that the King with His consort queen *will ascend the throne, possess the kingdom, and rule the earth with “a rod of iron.”*

Christ and His co-heirs, His bride, will rule the earth in this manner for 1,000 years, the manner and length of time which God has deemed necessary to effect order out of disorder (*cf.* Ps. 2:6-9; I Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 2:26, 27).

8

DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility of Individual Servants, Christians

“For the kingdom of the heavens is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money” (Matt. 25:14-18).

“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).

The Master of the house, prior to His departure, entrusted His goods to the servants within His house, leaving them with the command, “Occupy till I come.” The Master’s servants were to *be busily involved in the use of THAT which had been entrusted to their care during the time of the Householder’s absence, NOT in other things.*

The Householder had previously purchased the servants, paying the price with His Own blood at Calvary.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

They were “his own servants.” *They belonged to Him ALONE, and they were to serve Him ALONE.*

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (I Cor. 7:23).

The Master of the house, being perfectly just and righteous, is revealed to be a Householder Who deals with His servants accordingly. There is NO unfair treatment or any mistreatment of the servants. Everything is carried out within the framework of the Householder’s perfect justice and righteousness.

The Householder had entrusted a portion of His goods and a corresponding responsibility to each servant (*with ALL His goods being distributed after a particular fashion among ALL His servants*). NOT a single servant was overlooked. And within this distribution and responsibility, *there was ONE thing above ALL else which the Householder expected: faithfulness to assigned responsibility* (I Cor. 4:2).

Then within the Master’s just and righteous dealings, faithfulness would result in commendation and reward; BUT unfaithfulness, on the other hand, would result in rebuke and chastisement.

Upon the Householder’s return, *each servant would be called to an accounting, with a view to faithfulness concerning that which had been delivered to that particular servant.*

Any thought that the Householder may overlook anyone or certain things — whether in the realm of either faithfulness or unfaithfulness — *would be completely out of character with His perfect justice and righteousness.* A just distribution among and a corresponding expectation concerning *ALL of His servants* occurred prior to the Householder’s departure, and an equally just accounting and recompense would occur concerning *ALL of His servants* when the Householder returned.

IF there were to be rewards for faithfulness, there *MUST* also be a corresponding chastisement for unfaithfulness, else injustice within the Householder’s dealings with His servants would occur.

A failure to deal with ALL of His household servants on EXACTLY the SAME basis would be completely out of line with the Householder’s perfect justice and righteousness, as it related to ALL of His goods previously placed in their charge.

Ten Servants, Ten Pounds

“Ten” is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing, in the parable of the pounds, to *ALL of the Master’s servants* and *ALL of the Master’s goods*. Prior to His departure into the far country, Christ called *ALL of His servants* and delivered unto them *ALL of His business*.

NOT a single servant was overlooked, and NOT a single item in His business was held back.

Numerical completeness is shown in the Olivet Discourse parables through *the ten virgins* taking their lamps and going forth to meet the Bridegroom. This parable is simply a continuation of the thought from the previous parable (the parable of the Householder and His servant), presenting a different facet of teaching surrounding the matter of a house being broken up.

And the parable of the talents which follows the parable of the ten virgins is “just as” the parable of the ten virgins, presenting yet another facet of this same teaching.

The parable of the talents, on the other hand, is essentially the same as the parable of the pounds in Luke chapter nineteen. Both show an overall view of the same sequence of events, though each presents certain things after a slightly different fashion.

ALL of these parables, along with companion parables such as the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-14), *MUST* be viewed together in order to see the complete picture. *Certain specific truths are emphasized in each, with no one parable being an island unto itself (cf. II Peter 1:20).* Specific truths from one parable will be in complete keeping, in every detail, with specific truths from another parable; and as one begins to correlate these truths, the complete subject will correspondingly begin to open to his understanding.

Parables comprise truths placed alongside of previous truths to help explain the previous truths. This is the thought derived from the meaning of the word itself. Our English word “parable” is a transliterated form of the compound Greek word *parabole*, which means “to cast alongside [*para* means ‘alongside,’ and *bole* means ‘to cast’].” Thus, a parable is simply one truth placed alongside of an existing truth to provide further light on the existing truth.

In this respect, viewing the four parables comprising the

Christian section of the Olivet Discourse, the parable of the Householder and His servant (second parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth concerning a house being broken up at the time of the Lord's return (first parable) in order to provide further information concerning this parable.

In turn, the parable of the ten virgins (third parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth (second parable, reflecting back on the first parable) to provide even further information.

That is, the parable of the ten virgins was given to provide additional information which would help to further explain the parable of the Householder and His servant, along with the parable concerning a house being broken up. And the same can be said for the relationship existing between the parable of the talents (fourth parable) and that which precedes this parable (the third parable in particular but the first two parables as well).

With these things in mind, along with the thought of ten servants and ten pounds, we can move back into the Old Testament and view a corresponding type after a somewhat similar fashion.

In Gen. 24:1ff the account is given concerning Abraham sending His eldest servant into Mesopotamia to procure a bride for his son, Isaac. The servant had in his possession "ten camels" laden with *his master's goods*, and the Scripture specifically states that "*all the goods of his master were in his hand*" (v. 10).

"Ten" shows *ordinal completion* (ALL the goods of his master, carried by the ten camels), as in the parable of the ten virgins or the parable of the pounds. And the manner in which the pounds (the Master's goods) are to be used is shown in the type.

Abraham's eldest servant, typifying the Holy Spirit in the world today, is the one who took his master's goods and laid them out before the prospective bride. He, as in the antitype in John 16:14, 15, took the things of Abraham (which belonged to Isaac, for "unto him hath he [Abraham] given all that he hath" [v. 36; cf. 25:5]) and showed/gave them to Rebekah.

The Holy Spirit is doing *the same thing* in the world today. He is taking the things of the Father, which have been given to the Son (the Son has been made "*heir of all things*" [Heb. 1:2; cf. John 16:15]), and He is revealing them to Christians.

The Lord's servants, during the time of His absence, are to function in complete dependence upon the power and work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's goods are seen in possession of His servants in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, and these same goods are seen in possession of the Holy Spirit in the antitype of Gen. 24:10, 36, 53.

These goods are to be used by the Lord's servants under the perfect leadership of the Holy Spirit. This truth can be seen by comparing the parable of the ten virgins with the parable of the talents. The faithful, productive servants in the parable of the talents are synonymous with the five wise virgins possessing the extra supply of Oil in the parable of the ten virgins.

That is to say, faithful, productive servants are those wise servants filled with the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to govern and control their affairs.

Or, to state the matter after another fashion, faithfulness in allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself in His fullness in one's life will, through a use of the Lord's goods, result in productivity, fruit-bearing.

Another thing which can be seen through viewing the parables in the Olivet Discourse within their correct framework and comparing things taught in these parables with things taught in Genesis chapter twenty-four is the correct Scriptural view concerning the resurrection and rapture of Christians at the conclusion of the present dispensation. Some Bible students take the section preceding the parable of the Householder and His servant as referring to the *rapture* (ref. Chapter I in this book). However, aside from internal evidence within this section showing that this *CANNOT be the case*, the succeeding three parables reveal that something completely different is in view. That which is in view concerns *Christians appearing before the Lord in judgment following the rapture, NOT Christians being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture.*

ALL of the servants — the faithful and the unfaithful alike — are dealt with *by the Lord TOGETHER, at the SAME time.*

They are removed together (though such would have to be inferred if using the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse alone, for this section of Scripture does not deal with the rapture), and they are subsequently judged together.

The type in Genesis chapter twenty-four shows *ALL the servants of the Lord being removed together at the SAME time.*

When Abraham's servant departed Mesopotamia, Rebekah and her damsels rode upon the "ten" camels (v. 61; cf. v. 10).

That is, *ALL went forth to meet Isaac at the SAME time, though NOT ALL would be manifested as the bride. Rebekah ALONE covered herself with a veil when Isaac approached. She clothed herself, anticipating meeting the bridegroom, which could ONLY point to the wedding garment in the antitype.*

The wedding garment is comprised of "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8, ASV) — works emanating out of faithfulness to one's calling, producing an increase through the use of the talents or pounds — and this is the garment with which Christians *MUST clothe themselves when they arrive in the Bridegroom's presence, else they will appear naked* (cf. Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 3:17, 18).

The Master's servants have been called, and His goods have been committed to their trust. *ALL of the Master's servants participate in this calling, and ALL will one day be called forth to render an account.*

In THAT coming day there will be both faithful and unfaithful servants who will be shown to have been either profitable or profitless servants. It will be *at THAT time, NOT before*, that a separation of the Lord's servants will occur. It will be *in THAT day that a full disclosure will be made among ALL the Lord's servants concerning how each one handled that portion of the Lord's goods committed to his trust.*

A Distribution Among Servants

The main difference between the parable of the talents in Matthew and the parable of the pounds in Luke is the manner in which the Lord's goods were distributed to His servants.

In Matthew, these goods are referred to as "talents"; and they are seen being distributed *according to a man's ability*, with some servants receiving more than other servants. In the parable of the pounds though, each servant is seen receiving an identical amount simply because of *his individual identity* — a servant of the Lord. "Ability," as in the parable of the talents, is not in view.

The talents and pounds have to do with monetary units of exchange. These are the Master's goods, spoken of in a monetary

sense (gold or silver coins, which could vary in size and worth, would be forms of either).

The Lord described His goods and the use of these goods after a fashion which man could readily understand. Though the Lord's goods were not actually talents and pounds per se, the Lord, speaking to His disciples, used the quite familiar method of trading and trafficking within their own monetary system to illustrate how the goods He was leaving behind were to be used.

(The Greek words used in the parables of the talents and the pounds for that delivered by the Householder to His servants are *talanton* [translated "talent" in Matt. 25] and *mna* [translated "pound" in Luke 19].

Both refer to the same thing — *weighed amounts of a substance, usually coins, used as units of exchange.*)

The parable of the pounds shows each servant possessing equal responsibility and worth in the Lord's sight, though each servant does not exhibit the same degree of faithfulness and zeal during the Lord's absence. Ten pounds are delivered to ten servants, with each servant receiving one pound (v. 13; cf. vv. 16-20); and NO distinction is made in the servants *UNTIL* they appear before the Lord at the time of His return. *ONLY THEN* does a distinction and/or separation occur on the basis of productivity (emanating out of faithfulness) within the sphere of delegated responsibility.

The parable of the talents shows *the SAME thing, though after a different fashion*. Each servant receives a portion of the Lord's goods based on his "ability," with some servants receiving more than other servants; but there is still equal responsibility and worth among the servants in the Lord's sight. This is evident by the Lord's dealings with His servants at the time of His return. Servants receiving two different amounts preceding the Lord's departure but exhibiting the same degree of faithfulness and zeal during His absence received identical commendations from the Lord when He returned.

One servant received five talents, another servant received two talents, and another servant received one talent (v. 15).

The servant in possession of the five talents realized an increase of one hundred percent. He gained five additional talents because of his proper invested use of the initial five which the Lord had

entrusted to his care (v. 20). The servant in possession of the two talents did likewise. He also realized an increase of one hundred percent. He gained two additional talents through a proper invested use of the two talents which the Lord had entrusted to his care (v. 22). Each servant exhibited *the SAME degree of faithfulness and zeal to the responsibility with which they had been entrusted, and each received the SAME commendation (vv. 21, 23), which undoubtedly would result in the SAME reward.*

The servant in possession of the one talent though hid his lord's money, *realizing NO increase, for there was NO investment.* Had this servant exhibited the same degree of faithfulness and zeal as the other two servants, bringing forth an increase of one hundred percent, one additional talent, he too would have heard his Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant..." He would have received the same commendation (and undoubtedly the same reward) as the other two servants.

BUT, such was NOT his lot; and because of unfaithfulness to that with which he had been entrusted, he suffered rebuke and chastisement at the time he was called forth to give an accounting (vv. 24-30).

Rebuke and chastisement for unfaithfulness MUST be just as much a part of the Lord's dealings with his servants as commendation and reward for faithfulness. IF such were NOT the case, as previously shown, perfect justice and righteousness within the Lord's dealings with His servants would NOT be satisfied.

Different degrees of reward are shown in the parable of the pounds, *NOT* in the parable of the talents. Rewards are based on *works emanating out of faithfulness; and faithfulness, resulting in works, has to do with that portion of the Lord's goods committed to one's trust.*

A servant is to exercise faithfulness within *the scope of the talent/talents or the pound in his possession.* That delivered to another is *NOT* his concern but rather the concern of the one to whom it was delivered, and conversely.

In the parable of the pounds, one servant, through his efforts, brought forth one thousand percent (v. 16); and another servant, at the same time, through his efforts, brought forth five hundred percent (v. 18). Accordingly, *they were BOTH commended; BUT, they did NOT receive identical rewards (vv. 17, 19). Their rewards were commensurate*

with the return on their investment, resulting from their individual labors (faithfulness, resulting in the Lord doing a work through them).

Then, again, as in the parable of the talents, there is the case of the servant failing in his responsibility. And, as also in the parable of the talents, the Lord's perfect justice and righteousness were satisfied through the unfaithful servant receiving an equally just recompense (vv. 20-26). *He, as the faithful servants, received EXACTLY what he deserved, NOTHING more, NOTHING less.*

(In THAT future day, ALL actions of the Lord will be in perfect keeping with that which the expression "just recompense of reward" means [cf. Heb. 2:2; 10:35; 11:6, 26]. A just recompense is receiving EXACTLY what an individual deserves, whether good or bad.

Note how the Greek word for reward [*misthos*], having to do with "payment" or "wages" for services rendered, is used in a just recompense respect in the New Testament. In Luke 6:23, 35 and II John 8 the word is used in a positive sense, in connection with *faithfulness*; but in II Peter 2:13, 15 and Jude 11 the word is used in a negative sense, in connection with *unfaithfulness*. And in all of the preceding verses, each person — whether having exhibited *faithfulness* or *unfaithfulness* — received "a just recompense of reward [as will be the case with every Christian].")

The Commission to Servants

Two things are to be avoided during the time of the Lord's absence:

- 1) *Being unoccupied or idle.*
- 2) *Being busy in the wrong realm.*

Prior to His departure, *the Lord was very specific* concerning the conduct of His servants between the time of His departure and the time of His return. He had distributed His goods to His servants and had left them with the specific command, "*Occupy till I come.*"

The Lord's servants were to be occupied with handling the Lord's goods, His business, throughout the entire time of His absence. The Master of the house had left those within His household in charge of matters pertaining to affairs in His house. He had distributed the household business among His servants in the house according to

their individual ability to function in particular realms; and He had left each servant with a specific charge to faithfully carry out the particular household responsibility with which he had been entrusted.

1) *His Own Servants*

The parable of the talents provides the capstone for the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. If any question still lingers in one's mind concerning the identity of those in the field (24:40), those grinding at the mill (24:41), the servant who either remains faithful or becomes unfaithful (24:45-51), or the wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13), the opening verse of the concluding parable in this section will resolve the matter.

The Householder called "his own servants," which leaves no room to question the identity of those in view throughout the entire section.

There is a double possessive in the structure of the Greek text in Matt. 25:14 (*idios* [meaning "one's own"], preceded by the definite article), with the proper translation of this structure, as seen in the English text, "His Own."

Idios, "one's own," refers specifically to that which belongs to an individual in contrast to that which is not his, belonging to another. This is the word used twice in John 1:11, where the same double possessive structure appears in the Greek text each time:

"He came unto his own [*idia*, neuter plural, preceded by the article ('His Own things')], and his own [*idioi*, masculine plural, preceded by the article ('His Own people')] received him not."

The things to which He came (the throne of David, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.) were His Own things, though not yet in His possession; and those who rejected Him were His Own people, the Jewish people, constituting God's firstborn son, His covenant people, and Christ's brethren according to the flesh.

Things and individuals outside the scope of "His Own" are *NOT* in view in John 1:11. Jesus specifically stated that He had been sent *ONLY* to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and He commissioned His disciples to go *ONLY* to these same individuals, forbidding them to go "into the way of the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24).

The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth [Gk., *polit-*

eia, referring to one's 'citizenship' or 'political sphere of activity'] of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

The SAME thing is true through the use of the expression, "his own servants," in Matt. 25:14. The specific reference is *to those within His household, as those within the now desolated house of Israel in John 1:11*. "His own servants" can refer to *NONE other than those who belong to Him, comprising His house during the present dispensation*.

These individuals are *NEITHER Jew NOR Gentile but rather comprise the "one new man" in Christ*.

Through *NO type of sound exegesis* can "his own servants" be enlarged to include unsaved Jews or Gentiles.

And the servant thrust into the darkness outside at the conclusion of the parable *MUST be reckoned to possess the SAME standing relative to being the Lord's Own servant as the servants allowed to enter into the joy of their Lord in an earlier part of the parable*.

2) His Goods

In Genesis chapter twenty-four, the mission of Abraham's servant was to obtain a bride for Isaac. The servant had in his possession *ALL of his master's goods, which belonged to Isaac*; and these goods were carried into Mesopotamia with a view to obtaining a bride for Abraham's son, who remained with his father throughout the time of the search.

Abraham's servant, once in Mesopotamia and in the presence of Abraham's own people, made known the purpose for his journey; and once Rebekah had been singled out as the prospective bride, the servant brought forth "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." He gave these to Rebekah, and he also gave "precious things" to other family members (v. 53).

In the antitype, the Holy Spirit is in the world today to obtain a bride for Christ. This is His primary mission in the world during the present dispensation. He has in His possession all the Father's goods, which belong to the Son; and these goods have been brought into the world with a view to obtaining a bride for the Son, who remains with the Father throughout the time of the search.

The Holy Spirit, as He indwells those comprising the "one new

man" *in Christ*, makes known the purpose for His presence in the world today; and once this purpose begins to be realized — once Christians become aware of *the true nature of the Holy Spirit's present ministry and begin to manifest an interest in that which is uppermost in the mind of the Father* — they find themselves, as Rebekah, coming into possession of choice treasures from the things which belong to the Son. And, in line with the type, even other family members, other Christians, come into possession of "precious things" from the Son's storehouse of treasures.

The distribution of the Master's goods among His servants during the present dispensation *MUST* be in accord with I Cor. 2:9, 10:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit*: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

God has made known, *through His Word*, the things which He has prepared "for them that love him." And the indwelling Holy Spirit takes this Word, searching "all things, yea, the deep things of God," and reveals these things to Christians.

In the type there was a distribution of the son's goods to both Rebekah and other family members, *but this was NOT an equal distribution. The prospective bride received the largest and best portion.*

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds there was a distribution among all servants, but in the parable of the talents some servants received *more* than other servants.

The unequal distribution of the Lord's goods among Christians, as previously seen, occurs on the basis of "ability" (Gk., dunamis, "power" [v. 15]), which could ONLY be inseparably associated with the Christians' interest in and adherence to that which Scripture reveals as the very purpose for the present dispensation (ref. next page).

God has set aside two days, two thousand years, to call out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with His Son during the coming age. These co-heirs will constitute the bride of Christ, who will reign as consort queen, seated on the throne with Him.

And the Holy Spirit is in the world today procuring the bride.

It is those Christians who manifest an interest in and respond to the Holy Spirit's call as He searches for the bride who find themselves in the position of Rebekah in Gen. 24:53. These are the ones who come into possession of "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

Other Christians, though they are in possession of what is called "precious things," find themselves in an entirely different category in relation to things reserved peculiarly for the bride.

"Ability," as in the parable of the talents, in the light of the type in Gen. 24:1ff, is *NOT* to be thought of in a *natural* sense but in a *spiritual* sense. Some men have great natural "ability," allowing them to achieve numerous things; but "ability" in the parable of the talents is something entirely different. "Ability" in this parable *can ONLY have to do with an individual's capacity to carry on matters of a spiritual nature through spiritual means in the Lord's house, NOT matters of a natural nature through natural means either in the house or out in the world; and this ability pertains particularly and peculiarly to matters relating to the purpose for the present dispensation.*

Those Christians who understand the true nature of the Holy Spirit's mission in the world today, allowing the Holy Spirit to do a work in their lives within this same framework, would have to be looked upon as the ones possessing *the MOST capacity in the realm of "ability"*; and within this group there would be varying degrees of "ability," with some Christians being more zealous in their faithful servitude than other Christians.

"Lesser ability" within this same framework would correspondingly come about through *lesser capacity* as individuals possess lesser degrees of a work of the Spirit in their lives, in keeping with the purpose for the present dispensation.

An interesting thought drawn from Gen. 24:53 concerns the type goods, from those belonging to Isaac, which the servant gave to Rebekah. He delivered into her hands "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

The "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," which would constitute a portion of the Lord's goods used in trading and trafficking in the antitype, are ultimately seen in a similar sense in connection with

issues surrounding the judgment seat of Christ (where usage of that delivered to household servants during the present dispensation will be dealt with). Those Christians using the “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold” to bring forth an increase during the present time will see their works described after *the SAME fashion*, as “gold, silver, precious stones,” at the judgment seat. However, those Christians failing in this respect *will have NOTHING to show but works described after an entirely different fashion*, as “wood, hay, stubble” (I Cor. 3:12-15).

Then the “raiment” would undoubtedly point to *the wedding garment*, for the prospective bride in the type arrayed herself in a proper fashion before meeting Isaac (Gen. 24:65).

And the same can only hold true in the antitype.

The wedding garment is made up of “righteous acts” (Rev. 19:8), and Christians have been granted the privilege of clothing themselves through the proper use of the Lord’s goods in their possession.

Concluding Remarks:

The Lord’s command concerning the manner of living in which those of His house are to be engaged during the time of His absence is clear. *The Lord has delivered ALL His goods into the hands of ALL His servants and has left them with the command, “Occupy till I come.”*

Each servant is to be busily engaged, on his Lord’s behalf, with that portion of the Lord’s goods delivered to him personally. *He is NOT to be engaged in another’s affairs, NOR are others to be engaged in his affairs.*

He is responsible to the Lord ALONE to exercise faithfulness within the scope of His calling; and he will one day answer to the Lord ALONE, at the time of His return, for faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out delegated responsibility within the house.

The nature of rewards for faithfulness is clearly revealed to be that of occupying one of the numerous proffered positions as co-heir with Christ, seated with Him on the throne, during the coming age (Matt. 24:47; 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17, 19).

And the nature of chastisement for unfaithfulness is clearly revealed to be *NOT ONLY* that of being rejected for one of the numerous proffered positions with Christ *BUT* that of chastisement as well (Matt. 24:48-51; 25:26-30; Luke 19:22-26).

9

AND TO RETURN

Completing a Triad of Appearings

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” (Matt. 25:19).

“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much each man had gained by trading” (Luke 19:15).

The emphasis in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is upon the necessity of *present faithfulness* during the time of the Nobleman’s absence, with a view to *a future reckoning* at the time of the Nobleman’s return; and the future reckoning is with a view to *the kingdom which the Nobleman has gone away to receive*.

These two parables outline the complete scope of the present dispensation (God’s dealings with a house separate and distinct from the desolated house of Israel), providing the reason for the present dispensation, the reason for Christ’s departure into heaven, and the reason for His return.

The Nobleman (Christ) has gone into heaven “to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12).

The administration of this kingdom, a worldwide kingdom (Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 1:33), will require *numerous qualified rulers*; and during the time between Christ’s departure to receive the kingdom and His return after having received the kingdom, the “many sons” *who will ascend the throne and reign as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom are being called out* (cf. Acts 15:14; Heb. 2:9, 10).

These “many sons” will also form “the bride of Christ,” who will reign *as consort queen with the Son*. And, according to the type in Genesis chapter twenty-four, the central focus of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the world today is clearly seen to be that of *acquiring a bride for God’s Son (or, acquiring Christ’s co-heirs, who will form His bride)*.

The Father, at the beginning of the dispensation (Acts 2:1ff), *sent the Holy Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son, destined to reign as consort queen with the Son* (ref. Chapter VIII in this book).

And that which is central in the Holy Spirit’s ministry would have to be looked upon as ALSO central in the ministry of the Lord’s servants as they manage affairs in His house during the present dispensation.

The SAME revealed goal seen in the former MUST be seen in the latter.

(God’s Son CANNOT reign apart from co-heirs — apart from the “many sons” of Heb. 2:10 — to administer affairs with Him in the kingdom. This is the way matters were seen in David’s kingdom in the type in I, II Samuel. And things *can be NO different* for David’s greater Son in His kingdom.

As well, this is the way matters are seen throughout God’s universal kingdom [e.g., this earth, a province in the kingdom of God, presently under the control of Satan and his angels].

NOR can God’s Son reign apart from a bride. This is the way matters were established at the time of man’s creation in the opening chapters of Genesis. And *they can NEVER change*, which is why God had to possess a wife [Israel] to reign in the Old Testament theocracy.

In the type, Eve, a part of Adam’s body [Gen. 2:21-24], completed Adam, which would have allowed Adam to ascend the throne as one complete being.

This is why Satan approached Eve to bring about the fall. If he could cause Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, he would place Adam in a position where he *could NOT* realize the purpose for his creation, for Adam *could NOT THEN ascend the throne as a complete being*.

In the antitype, the second Man’s bride, the last Adam’s bride, as Eve, will be removed from and formed from a part of His body [following redemption, necessitated by Satan’s act in Genesis chapter three, with Christ having subsequently acted in the antitype of Adam’s actions, making redemption possible (Adam partaking of sin, Christ being made sin — Gen. 3:6; II Cor. 5:21)].

And, *EXACTLY* as in the type, Christ *can ONLY* reign as a complete being, with His bride seated alongside. The bride will be part of Christ's very being and complete the Son [in the same sense that Eve was part of Adam's very being and completed Adam].

The word translated "perfect" in Heb. 2:10 [referring to the "many sons," who will form *the bride, making the Son "perfect"*] is a translation of *teleioo* ['bring to an end'] in the Greek text. This word, contextually, could be better translated and understood as "complete." The "many sons" forming *the bride will complete God's Son in that day.*)

Salvation is for a *purpose*, and that purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. We have been called "unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Salvation is *NOT* so much *saved FROM* ("hell") as it is *saved UNTO* ("his kingdom and glory"). *And to deal with the salvation issue outside of this framework, as so many do, is NOT in keeping with the Biblical picture at all.*

ANY approach to evangelism as an end in itself, or any approach to discipleship which seeks to effect maturity apart from a knowledge of the reason Christ has gone into heaven, the reason for the present dispensation, and the reason for Christ's return, *CANNOT be considered as a Biblically oriented approach to be taken by the Lord's household servants.*

A proper evangelistic approach will view eternal salvation as a *beginning point, NOT an end*. Once an individual has been evangelized (saved), he finds himself beginning an entirely new life. He, as a newborn Christian, is *THEN* to be placed under the ministry of a pastor-teacher, where discipleship comes into view.

The pastor-teacher is to be instrumental in leading the person from immaturity to maturity within a framework surrounding *the reason for his salvation*. As there is a *purpose for salvation*, there is also a *purpose for maturity, with the SAME ultimate GOAL in view*.

The current Laodicean state of Christendom, along with the widespread immaturity of Christians and confusion in Christian circles, can all be traced directly to an incorrect approach to evangelism and/or discipleship. Somewhere along the way there has been a breakdown in the process, resulting in untrained or improperly trained household servants and a subsequent nonunderstanding or

misunderstanding of household affairs. *Mismanagement within the household by the Lord's servants then follows, with tragic consequences.*

Man fell from a created position in Genesis, and the purpose for man's salvation *can ONLY, in turn, have to do with the purpose for his creation:*

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion [Heb. *radah*, 'rule'] 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 things 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 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" (Gen. 1:26-28).

Redeemed man *possessing dominion over the earth*, in line with God's original purpose for his creation, *MUST be viewed as the ultimate GOAL of salvation.* That's the way matters surrounding the purpose for man's creation and the corresponding reason Satan brought about his fall are set forth in the first three chapters of Genesis.

And the remainder of Scripture regarding God's purpose surrounding man's salvation, his restoration, *MUST be in line with God's revealed purpose for bringing man into existence as set forth in the established foundations of Scripture.*

Man's restoration can ONLY be for the SAME purpose seen in the reason for his creation and fall.

And this is outlined after a fashion in the parables of the talents and pounds, along with so many other places in Scripture, that it would seemingly be impossible for man to miss it. But...

Three Appearings of Christ in Connection with Salvation

Within the framework of that which is revealed in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, the writer of Hebrews refers to three appearings of Christ in connection with salvation.

One appearing is past, one is present, and one is future.

Christ's three appearances have been recorded together within the same context at the end of the ninth chapter; and, in keeping with the previously announced work of the Son pertaining to bringing "many sons unto glory" (2:10), these three appearances provide the proper interrelationship between the Lord's work as *Prophet (past)*, *Priest (present)*, and *King (future)*.

1) Past Appearing

"...but now once in the end of the world ['the end of the ages'] *hath he appeared* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26b).

Unredeemed man is *dead in trespasses and sins*. He is alienated from God. Redeemed man though has been *made alive*, and a right relationship with God has been restored (Eph. 2:1-7; Col. 2:13-15). This has been accomplished solely through the finished work of the Redeemer, promised in Gen. 3:15 immediately following man's fall.

At the time Adam fell, "death passed upon all men." Adam fell as the federal head of the human race. Thus, the fall included *NOT ONLY* the one who had sinned, Adam, *BUT ALL* of his descendants as well, even though his descendants had neither been born nor would sin "after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (Rom. 5:12-14).

Consequently, "*all have sinned*"; and the penalty for sin, established in Eden, is *death* (cf. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:23).

(The Biblical definition of "death." as also established in Eden, is *separation from God*. Adam, eating of the forbidden fruit, experienced death the instant he partook of the fruit. Separation from God occurred at that point in time. Both Adam and Eve, at the time Adam partook of the fruit, *experienced spiritual death, separation from God*.)

Note that *sin* in Rom. 3:23 [because of Adam's federal headship bringing about *death* (Rom. 6:23), which has "passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12)] has left all men "short of the glory of God."

Adam lost this Glory at the time of the fall [a covering which enswathed his body], man finds himself estranged from this Glory today, but this Glory will one day be restored to man [Rom. 5:2]. And, *in THAT day*, man will no longer find himself "short of the glory of God."

The manner in which the Glory is first introduced in Scripture and later seen manifested in the camp of Israel leaves the Glory connected

with ONE thing alone — with regality, with man realizing the purpose for his creation in the beginning.

For further information in this realm, refer to Ch. VIII, “The Fig Tree” [pp. 120-124], in the author’s book, *Israel — Seven Years, Then...*

In order to bring man back into a right relationship with God, the Redeemer *MUST* pay sin’s penalty. The Redeemer *MUST* die on man’s behalf. This is the reason God sent His Son “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” bearing “the sins of many” (Heb. 9:26-28).

“...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3b).

As in the words of the song, “Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe...” His finished work of redemption leaves *NOTHING* for man to do simply because there is *NOTHING* which man, “dead in trespasses and sins,” could do (Eph. 2:1).

(Immediately before Christ died on the Cross, *He cried out ONE word: Tetelestai*, translated “It is finished [lit., “It has been finished”].” Christ then “breathed out” [literal rendering in Mark 15:37, 39; Luke 23:46]. That is, He willingly relinquished His life, for there was no need for Him to prolong His sufferings at this point in time [cf. Matt. 27:50; John 19:30]. All which He had come to do in relation to paying the price for man’s redemption had been accomplished.

Tetelestai is a perfect tense usage of *teleo*, meaning “to bring to an end,” “to finish,” “to complete.” Christ’s perfect tense usage of this word announced *a work which had been completed in past time, with the results of this work existing during present time in a finished state* [at the time He cried out, using the word *teleo* in the perfect tense].

NOTHING can ever be added to this finished work, for it is complete as it stands, with *God being satisfied with His Son’s finished work*; *NOR* can anything ever be taken from the Son’s finished work.

Again, *God is satisfied with the matter as it stands, and man simply CANNOT move over into and do one single act in this realm.*)

Aside from being spiritually dead and alienated from God, unredeemed man is presented in Scripture as *a ruined creation*; and the pattern concerning how God restores a ruined creation

has *FOREVER* been set forth in the opening verses of Genesis: The Spirit moved, God spake, light came into existence... (Gen. 1:2b, 3).

ALL work, resulting in the restored material creation, was accomplished entirely through Divine intervention. And it is the same concerning ruined man today.

ALL of the work has already been accomplished by man's Redeemer. Man, relative to this work, *MUST* be as completely passive as the ruined earth in Gen. 1:2b-5. *He can do NO more than simply receive that which Christ has already done on his behalf* (Acts 16:30, 31).

As has previously been shown, *Christ's appearance to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself* and *man's coming rule over the earth* are so intimately related that one *CANNOT* be separated from the other.

Man was created *to have dominion*; but he fell, bringing about his disqualification. And *redemption is with a view to placing man back into a position where he can ultimately occupy the position from which he fell*. Such an outlook on the intimate relationship between *the reason* surrounding man's creation and *the reason* surrounding his redemption is the focal point of Scripture, beginning with the opening verses of Genesis.

a) *Restoration of the Material Creation*: The material creation was restored, *NOT* for the incumbent ruler and those occupying positions with him (Satan and his angels), *BUT* for an entirely new creation about to be brought into existence.

A ruin of the material creation had previously occurred because of Satan's aspirations to exercise power beyond that which God had given to him. He sought to "be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14). Rather than being content with his position as ruler over one kingdom, he sought to elevate his throne and rule over more than one kingdom, possibly over all kingdoms.

As a result, his kingdom was wrecked, and he himself was disqualified as the earth's ruler, though he would continue to hold the sceptre until God removed him from this position and gave the kingdom to another.

A restoration of the ruined creation then subsequently occurred, with a view to a change in the government.

b) *The Creation of Man*: Immediately following the restoration of the material creation (Gen. 1:2b-25), God created man in His Own “image” and “likeness” (a type creation unknown in the angelic world). And man was created for *a stated purpose, in line with the immediately preceding restoration of the ruined domain*.

At the time of man’s creation, God said, “...let them have dominion...” (Gen. 1:26-28). This was the dominion possessed by Satan and his angels, which was to ultimately pass into the hands of man. The material creation had been restored, and man was brought into existence to take the sceptre (in the stead of Satan and his angels) and rule over the restored domain.

c) *The Fall of Man*: Satan, knowing why man had been created, immediately began a work to bring about man’s disqualification.

Satan approached Eve and deceived her through the same means which had previously brought about his own fall: “...ye shall be as gods [‘like God’]...” (Gen. 3:5).

Satan had previously sought to be “like the most High [like God],” resulting in his fall and a ruined kingdom; and God’s new creation, subsequently being deceived to move in the same direction (though only Eve was deceived [I Tim. 2:14]), experienced the same consequences. Man, partaking of the forbidden fruit, found himself disqualified to fulfill the very purpose for his existence, and the restored earth over which man was to rule fell under a curse.

(One must understand that man *did NOT* assume the sceptre immediately following his creation. In fact, man *has NEVER* held the sceptre. Satan has held the sceptre, without interruption, *FROM* the time of his appointment [preceding Adam’s creation] *UNTIL* the present time.

This can be shown quite easily by noting the principle of Biblical government which necessitates an incumbent ruler holding the sceptre *UNTIL* he is actually replaced.

Had man taken the sceptre, *he WOULDN’T* have relinquished it at the time he partook of the fruit of the forbidden tree [actually, *he COULDN’T* have]. *Such DIDN’T* occur when Satan sinned, and *it COULDN’T* have occurred when man sinned either. *God ALONE* places and removes rulers in His kingdom, even in the governmental administration among men on the earth today [Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 4:17, 25-32; 5:18-21].

Had man held the sceptre at the time of his fall, he, as Satan had previously done, would have had to continue holding the sceptre *UNTIL* God had brought forth a third provincial ruler. Then again, had man held the sceptre at this time, *it could NOT have been reclaimed by Satan* [who holds it today], for Satan was a disqualified ruler. *He would have had NO more claim on the sceptre than man.*

And, if man had held the sceptre and Satan had wrested it from man, the statement in Luke 4:5, 6, in the temptation account [Satan tempting Christ in the wilderness] *could NOT be true at all, for God would NOT have been the One to place Satan in this position:*

“And the devil, taking him [Christ] up into an high mountain [‘a mountain’ signifying *a kingdom*], shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world [one world kingdom comprised of many individual kingdoms] in a moment of time [cf. Rev. 11:15 — ‘the kingdom of the world,’ ASV, NASB].

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them [‘and its glory’]: *for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*”

Note, in this same respect [God positioning and removing rulers], the account of Saul and David in the Books of I, II Samuel, an account depicting the complete panorama of the past, present, and future government of the earth as it relates to the incumbent ruler [Satan] and the coming Ruler [the second Man, the last Adam].

Saul was anointed king over Israel; but Saul disqualified himself by refusing, as God had commanded, to destroy the Amalekites and all of their possessions [I Sam. 15:1ff], though Saul continued to reign. *And Saul would continue to reign UNTIL the one whom God had chosen to replace him was NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to ascend the throne.*

Then note that which the type, thus far, foreshadows:

Satan was anointed king over the earth; but Satan disqualified himself through seeking to extend his rule beyond his God-appointed position [Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:14], though Satan continued to reign.

And Satan would continue to reign UNTIL the One Whom God had chosen to replace him was NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to ascend the throne.

In the type, shortly after God rejected Saul as Israel’s ruler, God had Samuel anoint David *king over Israel* [I Sam. 16:10-13]. There were then *two anointed kings in Israel.*

But David didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, he eventually found himself in a place out in the hills, separated from Saul and his kingdom. And, during this time, certain faithful men joined themselves to David and remained out in the hills with him.

The day came when David was ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful men ready to rule with him. Then, Saul was put down, his crown was taken and given to David, *and David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government.*

In the antitype, after God had rejected Satan as the earth's ruler, God anointed His Son *King over the earth* [Ps. 45:6, 7, 16; Heb. 1:8, 9]. There were then, and there are today, *two anointed Kings over the earth.*

But God's Son, as David in the type, didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, as David, Christ finds Himself in a place of exile, separated from the kingdom. And, as in David's case, certain faithful individuals join themselves to Christ during this time, remaining in the place of exile with Him.

But the day is near at hand when *matters will continue EXACTLY as seen in the type.* Christ, in that day, as David in his day, will be ready to ascend the throne, *possessing a contingent of faithful followers to rule with Him.*

THEN, Satan, as Saul, will be put down, his crown will be taken and given to Christ; and Christ, with His faithful followers, will move in and take over the government.)

d) *The Redemption of Man:* Immediately following the fall, God promised man a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15); and because God *does NOT change His mind* concerning His "gifts and calling" (Rom. 11:29), *the purpose for man's redemption would have to be in keeping with the purpose for his creation.*

Man was to be redeemed with a view to his possessing dominion over the earth (which *could ONLY* be dominion over a future earth, for the earth following man's fall lay [and continues to lie today] under "the bondage of corruption" [Rom. 8:21]).

e) *God's Firstborn Son in Egypt:* Two and one-half millennia later we see God culminating a work and moving in the direction of placing man in the position for which he had been created.

God called *His son, His firstborn son, the nation of Israel* (Ex. 4:22, 23), out of Egypt under Moses *to exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

These rights, among other things, had to do with the people of Israel ruling over all the Gentile nations of the earth — *national rights which had to do with Israel and the nations.*

BEFORE God removed His people from Egypt though, redemption had to *FIRST* occur, as shown by the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt. *ALL the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt came under the sentence of death* — sin's wages — *and NO move could be made toward the land of Canaan UNTIL these wages had been paid.*

To satisfy sin's wages but yet remove the firstborn from Egypt alive, God made provision for a substitutionary death. God decreed that a lamb from the flock could die in the stead of the firstborn in a family. The lamb was to be slain, the blood was to be caught in a basin, hyssop was to be dipped in the blood, and the blood was to be applied to the door posts and lintel of the house in which the firstborn lived.

Then, when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight, executing the decreed death of the firstborn, He would, of necessity, *pass over the house where the blood had been applied.*

The applied blood showed that the firstborn within the house had already died. He had died via a recognized vicarious means; and consequently death could NO longer have any claim on him (Ex. 11:4-7; 12:1ff).

Redemption, as shown by the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt, was for a purpose; and that purpose was to be brought to pass by the Israelites being removed from Egypt and realizing the rights of the firstborn in the land of Canaan.

f) *God's Firstborn Son Sent into the World:* A millennium and one-half beyond the Exodus from Egypt under Moses, God fulfilled His promise concerning a coming Redeemer.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Jesus was God's Firstborn Son, the One in line to exercise the rights of primogeniture as the second Man, the last Adam; and He came into the world *to redeem man, with the adoption in view.*

Adoption places “sons” in the position of *firstborn sons*. The adoption is with a view to man exercising regal activity in God’s kingdom, for *ONLY sons can rule in this kingdom* (e.g., “angels” during present time, with all angels being *sons of God* because of their individual creation); and *ONLY firstborn sons can rule in God’s kingdom in the human realm*.

In this respect, the central purpose for Christ’s finished work at Calvary, according to Gal. 4:4, 5, has to do with placing man in a position (in the position of a son) where he can be adopted (into a firstborn status, as a *firstborn son*), *wherein man can realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning*.

Then, in another respect, Gal. 4:4, 5 clearly reveals that the purpose for redemption has to do with *the birthright*, associated with *the inheritance* in Gal. 3:29 (cf. Gal. 4:7).

The whole of the matter is inseparably tied together — “salvation” resulting in *sonship*, and then “adoption” resulting in *firstborn sons who can realize the rights of the firstborn and participate in the inheritance as co-heirs with Christ*.

God has redeemed man in order that He can ultimately bring man into a position where he can (as co-heir with Christ, God’s Firstborn) also realize the rights belonging to firstborn sons.

Over seven hundred years before Christ’s birth, Isaiah had prophesied concerning *the status of the earth’s future government under God’s promised Redeemer*:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts [the Lord burning with zeal to see His Son placed on His ‘holy hill of Zion’] will perform this” (Isa. 9:6, 7; cf. Ps. 2:6, 7).

This promise was then reiterated to Mary by the angel Gabriel shortly before the Redeemer’s birth (Luke 1:31-33).

Following Christ's birth the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, the capital of Jewry, seeking the One Who had been "born *King of the Jews*."

Herod the king was *troubled*, along with all Jerusalem; and Herod later had numerous Jewish children slain in and around Bethlehem in a vain attempt to destroy the newborn King (Matt. 2:1-18).

When Christ began His public ministry at about the age of thirty (Luke 3:23), the message to Israel concerned *a kingdom*; but Israel rejected the message and the Messenger.

At the end of His earthly ministry, Christ, because of Israel's rejection, was arrayed as a mock King; and the people of Israel then climaxed their rejection by claiming allegiance to Caesar and calling for Christ's crucifixion.

Jesus was then crucified, with an inscription placed above His head which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 4:17; 21:33-39; John 19:1-19).

Following His resurrection, Christ spent forty days with His disciples, teaching them things pertaining to "the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3); and He then departed into heaven "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

g) *God's Firstborn Son Presently Being Called Forth*: "Israel" is still *God's firstborn*, though lying desolate; and this nation will one day be redeemed to realize *the regal status held by firstborn sons*.

However, while the house of Israel lies desolate, God is dealing with a separate and distinct house, destined to be adopted into a *firstborn status*. An adoption into this position, placing Christians in the same position as that held by Israel (in relation to firstborn sons), is, as previously shown, also *for regal purposes*.

ONLY sons can rule, and the purpose for man's redemption necessitates the adoption, for, again, ONLY firstborn sons can rule in God's kingdom in the human realm.

Christians are referred to in Scripture as both "children" and "sons" (about an equal number of times for each). But it is *ONLY* as "sons" that Christians await the adoption. "Children" are *NOT* adopted; *ONLY* "sons" can be adopted, evident from the meaning of the Greek word for "adoption."

(The word translated “adoption” in the New Testament is *hui-othesia*, a compound word [*huios*, “son”; and *thesis*, “to position,” “to place”]. Thus, *huiiothesia* [“adoption”] simply means “son-positioning or “son-placing” [positioning or placing *one who is already a son, NOT positioning or placing a child*]. And Christians, already occupying the position of “sons” [because of their position “in Christ” — *new creations* “in Christ”], will be placed as *firstborn sons* at the time of the adoption.

[Note that *huiiothesia*, when used in relation to Christians, *could NOT* possibly refer to “children” being placed as *sons*, for, as previously stated, Christians already occupy the position of “sons,” preceding the adoption (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8)].

It is ONLY through this firstborn status, through being adopted, that Christians can one day occupy regal positions in Christ’s kingdom. “Christ” is God’s firstborn Son [because of birth (Heb. 1:6)]; “Israel” is God’s firstborn son [because of creation and adoption (Ex. 4:22, 23; Isa. 43:1; Rom. 9:4)]; and Christians, reigning with Christ, MUST occupy the same standing in the kingdom [God’s firstborn son (the one new man, seen corporately), which can occur ONLY following the adoption].

Christians as a corporate group in that coming day, the “church of the firstborn [lit., ‘called out firstborn ones’ (Heb. 12:23)]” will be seen as *God’s firstborn son*, as Israel is presently seen as *God’s firstborn son*, awaiting that coming day when *the rights of firstborn sons* will be realized.

This is why the adoption of Christians occupies such a prominent place in Romans chapter eight and Galatians chapter four, where *the coming inheritance of the saints and the manifestation of a new order of sons are in view*.

For additional information on this subject, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*.)

Realizing the rights of primogeniture in such a position can ultimately be held *ONLY* by those who have appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb. As in Egypt, the firstborn via natural birth comes under the sentence of death (which, in the antitype, would include everyone in the human race; God has rejected the first birth, necessitating a second birth, a birth from above, a supernatural birth [John 3:6, 7]).

And as in Egypt, a Substitute has been provided; and, as also in Egypt, *salvation is for a purpose, which has to do with regality*.

Salvation is for a purpose associated with the birthright, and

redeemed individuals will be adopted in order to exercise the rights belonging to *firstborn sons*.

The simple, clear picture presented by the whole of Scripture concerns *man being brought back into the position for which he was created, which first necessitates redemption*.

Christ appeared "once...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," *with a view to two subsequent appearances*.

2) Present Appearing

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Heb. 9:24).

During the period between the time of His departure to receive the kingdom and the time of His return in possession of the kingdom, Christ is *NOT ONLY* seated at the right hand of the Father, *BUT* He is also exercising a high priestly ministry in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, anticipating receiving the kingdom from the Father; and He is exercising the office of High Priest in order to effect a present cleansing for those comprising the "one new man" *in Christ*, anticipating one day bringing forth "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing..." (Eph. 5:26, 27; Heb. 1:13; I John 1:6-2:2).

Christ presently ministers in the Holy of Holies on the basis of His shed blood. This blood was shed at Calvary to provide redemption for fallen man, and this same blood is presently on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary to provide a present cleansing for the redeemed.

Saved man, still possessing the old sin nature and residing in a body of death, is ever subject to defilement as he ministers on earth during his pilgrim walk, necessitating cleansing. And God provided a means of cleansing for His people during Old Testament days, and He has done the same today.

The Old Testament priests were provided with a brazen laver, containing upper and lower basins filled with water, to wash their

hands and feet as they ministered on behalf of the people between the brazen altar and the Holy Place; and blood sacrifices were offered by the priests daily and by the high priest on the day of atonement to provide a cleansing for those who had previously appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs (Heb. 7:27; 9:6, 7, 22).

New Testament priests though have been provided with a past Sacrifice, with no additional sacrifices ever again necessary. It is “a new and living way,” being “washed with pure water,” to effect a cleansing for those having previously appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb (Heb. 7:27; 10:12-22).

Christ’s past ministry as *Prophet* makes possible His present ministry as *Priest*, and both ministries look out ahead to the same thing — Christ’s future ministry as *King*.

One day Christ will terminate His present ministry and come forth from the Holy of Holies, first to reckon with those whom He has redeemed and for whom He presently ministers, and then to reign over the earth with the “many sons” whom He will have brought unto glory.

(For additional information on Christ’s present ministry on behalf of Christians in the heavenly sanctuary, refer to Chapter IV in this book.)

3) Future Appearing

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him *shall He appear* the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

The three appearings of Christ are correspondingly connected with the three aspects of salvation:

We have been saved (past [Eph. 2:8, 9]).

We are being saved (present [I Cor. 1:18]).

We are about to be saved (future [Heb. 1:14]).

Once an individual has been saved (past, through the finished work of Christ at Calvary), that individual is then dealt with on an entirely different plane. He is then dealt with concerning a present salvation (on the basis of Christ’s past work at Calvary, but con-

nected with His present work in the heavenly sanctuary); and this is with a view to a future salvation (at the time of Christ's return).

"For by grace are ye saved ['you have been saved'] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish ['to the ones perishing'] foolishness; but unto us which are saved ['who are being saved'] it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ['for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation']" (Heb. 1:13, 14).

The past aspect of salvation (Eph. 2:8, 9) has to do with man's *spirit*. Man is a tripartite being comprised of body, soul, and spirit; and each of these three parts of man, within God's economy, is subject to salvation at different times. When man sinned in Eden, he died, just as God had decreed (Gen. 2:17). Since his body continued to live, and his soul — the life-giving principle in the blood (Lev. 17:11) — also continued to live, it is evident that man experienced a *spiritual death*.

Unredeemed man today, possessing an unredeemed body housing an unredeemed soul, is *spiritually dead*. The birth from above, correspondingly, is a *spiritual birth*, effecting the change "from death unto life."

"That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*."

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again ['born from above']" (John 3:6, 7).

(Note that Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus relative to the birth from above in John chapter three has to do with *the saved*, not with the unsaved. And, in like manner, *all of the other references in the New Testament where the birth from above is mentioned also have to do with the saved* [James 1:18; I Peter 1:3, 23; I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18].

The reference is to a *Divine work continuing to be wrought in the one [a Christian] in whom a Divine work was initially wrought [at the time that the Christian was saved]*.

Though the reference in John chapter three [along with the other referenced passages] has to do with the saved, the thought of being brought forth from above would have to be thought of relative to the unsaved as well. The whole of the matter surrounding a person's salvation — whether past, present, or future aspects of salvation are in view — has to do with a *bringing forth from above at any point in this process* — whether of the unsaved or of the saved [*i.e.*, a beginning work of the Spirit, followed by a continuing work of the Spirit].

From beginning to end, the thought of a bringing forth from above would have to be in view. Thus, John 3:6, 7, though contextually referring to a work among the saved, can also be used in a secondary sense relative to the unsaved, for *there is NO other way* for an unsaved person to be saved aside from a Divine work being performed in his life, a bringing forth from above.

For more information on this subject, refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*.)

The salvation of the soul, unlike the salvation of the spirit, is both present and future. And only those who have been born from above, realizing the salvation of their spirits, can enter into the things associated with the salvation of the soul. An individual *MUST* first pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1). *THEN, and ONLY THEN*, does the *salvation of the soul* come into view.

The present aspect of salvation (I Cor. 1:18), having to do with *the soul*, will be brought to completion at the time Christ returns and effects the redemption of man's body. The saving of the soul has to do with *the life which one lives after he has passed "from death unto life."*

This is the salvation referred to in connection with Christ's return in Heb. 9:28 (or Heb. 1:14), to be realized by those who "look for him [faithful servants in the house awaiting the Householder's return]."

Hebrews, as all of the other New Testament epistles, is a book dealing centrally with *the salvation of the soul*; and Christ, Who was "once offered to bear the sins of many [effecting the salvation

of the *spirit*]” is going to appear the “second time without sin unto salvation [to effect the salvation of the *soul*].”

(For a more detailed discussion of the preceding, see the author’s book, *Salvation of the Soul*.)

To deal with Christ’s first coming apart from His second coming is UTTER FOLLY. To have the message of an evangelist (concerning Christ’s past work) apart from the subsequent message of a pastor-teacher (concerning Christ’s present and future work) can ONLY lead to spiritual disaster in the Christian life.

Christ appeared once “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” He now appears “in the presence of God for us,” and one day He will “appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” *These three appearances comprise an indivisible unit inseparably related to man ultimately being brought back into the position for which he was created.*

Three Appearings of Christ in Connection with Peace

Paul begins each of his thirteen epistles with the words, “Grace to you and peace...,” adding the word “mercy” in I, II Timothy and Titus (ref. also I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2; II John 3; Jude 2; Rev. 1:4).

“Grace” *always appears FIRST*, for apart from God’s “grace” there can be NO “peace.” In this respect, “faith” as the means through which man is saved *can NO more* stand alone than “peace” can stand alone:

“For by *grace* are ye saved [‘you have been saved’] through *faith*...”
(Eph. 2:8a).

The three appearings of Christ in connection with *peace* parallel the three appearings of Christ in connection with *salvation*.

There are two aspects of a present peace, in connection with Christ’s past and present appearings; and there is a future peace, in connection with Christ’s future appearing.

1) Peace with God (Rom. 5:1)

God has established peace “through the blood of his [Christ’s]

cross" (Col. 1:20), allowing fallen man to have "peace with God" through justification "by faith" (Rom. 5:1). Apart from *justification*, peace between God and man CANNOT exist (Isa. 48:22; 57:21).

Saved man possesses a positional standing before God which is based entirely upon *the finished work of Christ*; and within this positional standing, wherein redeemed man possesses God's imputed righteousness, there is perfect peace.

2) Peace of God (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15)

The peace of God can exist ONLY after peace with God has been established. The peace of God has to do with fellowship between God and those who have *peace with Him through the blood of the Cross*. And Christ is presently ministering in the Holy of Holies, on the basis of His blood on the mercy seat, to allow redeemed man to conduct his pilgrim walk within the framework of this peace (1 John 1:3-2:2).

Whether or not redeemed man possesses *the peace of God can have NO affect on his peace with God*. Apart from *the peace of God* though, one's servitude will be affected, producing dire present results and future consequences.

3) Universal Peace (Isa. 9:6, 7)

Christ's first appearance was to effect "peace with God" through *redemption*, not to bring about universal peace (Matt. 10:34; Luke 12:51). Universal peace awaits His reappearance on earth. Peace on earth today exists *ONLY* among those "in whom he is well pleased" (Luke 2:14, ASV), which would first necessitate *redemption*, for peace CANNOT exist between God and the unredeemed.

The Middle East is the center of unrest during the present day, particularly Jerusalem. However, the day is coming when *the Middle East will be the center of peace, particularly Jerusalem.*

"Jerusalem" means *city of peace*; and when the "Prince of peace" returns (Isa. 9:6), He will "speak peace unto the heathen [nations]" from this city as He holds the sceptre and rules from David's throne (Zech. 9:10; cf. Isa. 9:7).

ONLY THEN will the peace which presently eludes the nations exist among the nations on the earth (Ps. 122:6).

10

THOU GOOD, FAITHFUL SERVANT *Reward Exactly Commensurate with Service*

“And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:20-23).

“Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

And he said likewise to him, Be thou over five cities” (Luke 19:16-19).

Within the framework of the three appearances of Christ in Heb. 9:24-28, it *MUST* be recognized that no single appearance stands alone, isolated from the other two.

Christ's past appearance, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26), allows Him to presently "appear in the presence of God for us [appearing as High Priest for a redeemed people, ministering on the basis of His blood on the mercy seat for those in need of cleansing because of defilement through contact with the world in which they presently reside]" (v. 24).

And *Christ's past and present appearances* allow for a *future appearance* "without sin unto salvation [a 'salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' — 'the salvation of your souls' (I Peter 1:5, 9)]" (v. 28; cf. Heb. 10:37-39).

Salvation is for a purpose:

Christ appeared *the FIRST time*, providing redemption, to make that purpose possible.

He is *NOW* appearing in the presence of God, as High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary, to provide a present cleansing for those whom He has redeemed, with that purpose in view.

And He will *ONE DAY* return, reappear, "without sin unto salvation," to bring that purpose to pass.

God's purpose for redeeming man is the SAME as His purpose for creating man.

Man was created to possess dominion over the earth; and fallen man, in no position to exercise this dominion, has been redeemed with a view to fulfilling this purpose:

"...let them have dominion [Heb., *radah*, '...let the rule']" (Gen. 1:26, 28).

The "same Jesus" Who departed into heaven forty days following His resurrection is going to one day return *in the SAME manner that He went away* (Acts 1:11; cf. John 14:3).

Christ has gone away "to receive for himself a kingdom," and He will return *to take the reins of government AFTER He receives the kingdom* (Luke 19:12, 15).

At *THAT time* He will reckon with those whom He has redeemed and for whom He presently ministers. And *THIS reckoning* will

be with a view to placing those within His house in various positions of power, occupying the throne as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom.

It is *THEN* that man will possess the dominion of which God spoke in Gen. 1:26-28.

To Reckon with Them

The first order of business after Christ returns for His household servants will be *to reckon with these servants*. The Householder's servants will be removed from the earth to appear in His presence at what Scripture calls "the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10).

And it is here, at Christ's judgment seat, that "every man's work shall be made manifest."

Works, activities performed by those in the house during the time of the Householder's absence, will be tried "by ['in'] fire" to determine *the quality*. Works which endure the fire and remain, likened to "gold, silver, precious stones," will result in *a reward*; works consumed by the fire though, likened to "wood, hay, stubble," will result in *loss* (I Cor. 3:11-15).

1) Judgment for Those Having Already Been Judged

Christians have been justified, declared righteous, on the basis of Christ's past, finished work at Calvary (Rom. 5:15-19). And this justification occurred in past time, at the moment of belief.

In this respect, *it is NOT possible* for a Christian to ever appear in judgment where matters pertain to the salvation which he presently possesses. Judgment has already occurred. God judged sin — that which separates man from God — in the person of His Son, and *God is satisfied*.

The impossibility of a Christian ever coming into judgment though pertains strictly to *his eternal salvation*.

One's eternal destiny, at the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes a settled, closed matter; and for a Christian to ever be brought into judgment where the issue at hand pertains to his eternal destiny would be to bring into judgment once again that which God has already judged — *the finished work of His Son*.

Actually *there is NO such thing* as a future judgment — for either the saved or the unsaved — where the issue will involve eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

This *will NOT be, it CANNOT be*, an issue at the judgment seat of Christ where Christians appear at the end of this present dispensation, preceding both the Tribulation and the Millennium.

NOR will it be, *it CANNOT be*, an issue when the unsaved appear at the great white throne judgment following the Millennium.

In BOTH instances, judgment with respect to the eternal destiny of those being judged will have already occurred, with the issue already settled.

John 3:18 makes this very clear:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned [‘judged’] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

For the believer, *judgment is past*. Sin has been judged in the person of God’s Son; and sin’s penalty, which is death, has been paid.

For the unbeliever, *judgment is likewise past* (“condemned [‘judged’]” is the translation of a word [*krino*] appearing in the perfect tense in the Greek text, showing a judgment completed in past time with the results of this judgment presently existing in a finished state). The unbeliever has already been condemned; he has already been judged, and matters presently exist in this state.

(For God to judge the unbeliever on the basis of his eternal destiny would be for God to once again judge sin, which He has already judged in the person of His Son.

Though sin’s penalty, *death*, has already been paid on his behalf [though Christ has died, paid the price], it has not been received. He has not applied the blood; and, relative to the death of the firstborn, there is no vicarious death. The unsaved person, though judgment for sin is past, will still have to pay sin’s penalty. And he will have to do it himself.

Thus, insofar as one’s eternal destiny is concerned, *NO judgment awaits the believer or the unbeliever. Judgment is past for BOTH, with the eternal destiny of BOTH a closed matter, already determined on one basis alone — belief or unbelief — having occurred in time past.*

The difference between the saved and the unsaved relative to eternal verities lies in the fact that the One Who paid sin's penalty, *death*, has been accepted by one but not by the other. One has believed; the other has not believed. One, through a vicarious means, has had the penalty paid on his behalf; the other though, apart from this vicarious means, will have to pay the penalty himself.

Though judgment itself is past, the results of that judgment await a future time. For the saved, the results will be carried out in one manner [with no one excluded]; and for the unsaved, the results will be carried out in another manner [with no one excluded as well].)

2) To Be Judged According to Works

One should note very carefully that it is "works" which come under review at all future judgments in Scripture, *whether of the saved or the unsaved* (I Cor. 3:13-15; Rev. 20:12, 13; cf. Ezek. 20:34-38; 44:10-16; Matt. 25:34-36, 41-43; Rev. 20:4). And since *man's works can have NOTHING* to do with eternal salvation, something other than issues surrounding one's eternal destiny would have to be in view.

Or, to turn that around, since the eternal destiny of those being judged will have already been determined at any future judgment, *man's works* are the *ONLY possible thing* which could come under review, whether of the saved or the unsaved. There is *NOTHING* else which could be considered.

Those who believe, who are "not condemned ['not judged']" (for whom no judgment relative to eternal salvation awaits) will appear at one judgment; and *those who have NOT believed*, who have been "condemned already ['judged already']" (for whom no judgment relative to eternal salvation awaits as well) will appear at another judgment, entirely separate from that of the redeemed.

Judgment relating to eternal salvation or eternal damnation *MUST be a past matter in EVERY future judgment*, with individuals appearing at a particular judgment (of either the saved or the unsaved, never a combination of the two), *WHOLLY on the basis of THAT which has already been determined*.

According to the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, Christians will appear before Christ in judgment to ascertain *how MUCH each person has gained through trading and trafficking in the Lord's business during His time of absence* (Luke 19:15).

There is *NOTHING* whatsoever about judgment relating to one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation in these parables. Such would be an impossibility. These are parables showing the household servants, those in possession of eternal salvation (those who *CANNOT* be called into judgment relative to this matter), being called to an accounting by the Householder at the time of His return.

The Householder will gather "his own servants" before His judgment seat — the judgment seat of Christ — to reckon with them on the basis of their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out assigned duties in the house during the time of His absence (*works* emanate out of "faithfulness," and it is *works* which will come under review).

Faithfulness, producing works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones," will result in commendation and reward; and unfaithfulness, producing works comparable to "wood, hay, stubble," will result in rebuke and loss.

And that which will be in view, as an end result of this reckoning, has to do with the household servants either being accorded or being denied *positions of power and authority as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom*.

Insofar as the unsaved appearing at the great white throne in Rev. 20:11-15 is concerned, judicial issues relating to eternal salvation or eternal damnation likewise *CANNOT* come into view. Individuals not in possession of eternal life (those upon whom the wrath of God abides, who have already been judged relative to their unbelief) will be judged *on the basis of their own works*, with their *eternal destiny already a settled, closed matter*.

The judgment of the saved occurs before the Millennium, for *millennial issues are in view*. The judgment of the unsaved though does not occur until following the Millennium, for their judgment has *NOTHING* to do with the Millennium. Their judgment has to do with *the eternal ages ALONE*, and their judgment occurs immediately before the onset of these ages.

Have Thou Authority

Faithfulness in exercising one's household responsibilities

during the time of the Householder's absence will result in the household servant being accorded responsibility with his Lord in the kingdom. *Unfaithfulness* though will result in the household servant being denied such responsibility.

The principle connecting *faithfulness in present responsibility* with *being accorded future responsibility* was set forth by Christ in the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-13.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful...who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (vv. 10, 11).

The unjust steward, placed in charge of his Master's goods, had failed to faithfully discharge his duties concerning the use of these goods. The steward had not acted in a manner which would be to his Master's advantage, and, *through mismanagement*, he had wasted his Master's goods (v. 1).

The day arrived when the steward was called *to render an account concerning his stewardship*. The Householder had heard about the steward's unfaithfulness; and upon investigation, with the steward in His presence, the Householder found it necessary to take action which would remove him from the position which he held (v. 2).

The steward, when removed from his position and relieved of his household duties, would no longer hold a position of responsibility in the house. The Householder's goods *would NO longer be at his disposal*, for that which had previously been committed to his trust would have been taken from him.

Unfaithfulness in the discharge of his duties had resulted in his being brought to this position, *wherein he was about to be left with NOTHING*. And, though it is not so stated in the parable, this responsibility, in the light of that seen in the parables of the talents and pounds, would undoubtedly have then been given to another steward.

This, of course, would be the Lord's Own commentary on the unfaithful servant in the parable of the pounds or the parable of the talents.

The servant in each parable had been placed in charge of a portion of his Master's goods, but he exhibited unfaithfulness in the responsibility committed to his trust.

Then at the time of reckoning, *in his Master's presence*, that with which he had previously been entrusted, belonging to his Master, was taken from him and given to another (Matt. 25:28, 29; Luke 19:24-26), *leaving him with NOTHING*.

Revealed unfaithfulness in delegated responsibility in the house, in both parables, correspondingly resulted in a denial of responsibility in the kingdom.

(There is a further teaching concerning "repentance [a change of mind]" in the parable of the unjust steward. He was accorded time to bring about a change in that which he had done.

This though is not seen in the parables of the talents and pounds. Once the Master of the house has risen up and called his stewards to an accounting, the text is quite clear:

The door of opportunity will THEN be closed forever [Matt. 25:10; Luke 13:25]. "Time" for household servants [Christians] to bring about any type change simply *will NOT exist beyond this point.*)

In the parables of the talents and pounds, the inverse of that which the unfaithful servant in the parable of the unjust steward experienced was shown to be true by that which the faithful servants experienced. They had been faithful in delegated responsibility in the house; and, as a result, they were accorded responsibility with their Lord in the kingdom which He had gone away to receive.

And, in like fashion, the inverse of that which the Lord said about unfaithfulness in the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:11 would also be true. The Lord would commit to their trust "the true riches." They had been *faithful in lesser responsibility*, and they could be trusted, in like manner, to be *faithful in greater responsibility* (v. 10).

1) The Nature of Rewards

Being rewarded or suffering loss when Christ returns *will have to do with the KINGDOM which He has gone away to receive.*

Faithfulness in one's delegated responsibility as a servant in the

house now will result in the servant being elevated into the position of ruler during that coming day and being accorded responsibility as a co-heir with Christ in His kingdom.

However, unfaithfulness in one's delegated responsibility as a servant in the house now will result in the servant being placed in a position during that coming day where he can NO longer even come in contact with the things of His Master.

That with which he had been entrusted as a servant in the house will be taken from him, leaving him completely estranged from the things belonging to his Master. And for such an individual, because of irresponsibility, *there will be NO elevation into the position of ruler*, being accorded responsibility as a co-heir with Christ in His kingdom.

Relative to Christ's millennial reign and proffered positions with Him in His kingdom, *it will ALL be over. Christ's millennial reign is a one-time event which will NEVER be repeated.*

Christ's words, reserved for faithful servants, are very clear:

"...thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21, 23; cf. Luke 19:17, 19).

And the inverse of this is shown to be equally true relative to Christ's dealings with unfaithful servants (Matt. 25:24-30; cf. Luke 19:20-24). The same principle which had previously been set forth in the parable of the unjust steward is then reiterated in both the parables of the talents and the pounds:

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. 25:29; cf. Luke 19:26).

The key to the matter is *faithfulness to delegated responsibility*. Christ will elevate household servants into positions of rulership, allowing them to ascend the throne and occupy various appointed positions of power and authority as co-heirs with Him, *strictly on the basis of their prior faithfulness.*

NOTHING could be clearer than the Householder's Own words:

"...thou hast been faithful...I will make thee ruler."

2) *The Time of Rewards*

Events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ are viewed by some individuals as *ongoing events* which occur during and at the conclusion of the present dispensation rather than events which occur in their entirety at the conclusion of the dispensation.

Such a view is often advanced by its advocates in order to teach “selective rapture” (which itself takes various forms, teaching, after some fashion, that *only faithful Christians* will be removed from the earth at the time of the rapture).

This particular thought within the selective rapture teaching runs somewhat along the lines that Scripture is clear concerning the necessity for *ALL Christians* to appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10).

And if this judgment can be shown to be *an ongoing event* during the present dispensation, verses such as Phil. 3:11 (the “out-resurrection”) would have to be understood within the framework of a select group of Christians being raised at the time of the rapture, based on prior findings at the judgment seat.

However, *NEITHER* a present, ongoing judgment *NOR* a future, selective rapture of Christians is taught in Scripture. The parables of the talents and the pounds make this very clear.

(There are also a number of other passages which teach this same truth as well. See the author’s book, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter II, “We Must All Appear”).

In the parables of the talents and the pounds, the Householder *calls His servants to an accounting ONLY AFTER He receives the kingdom and returns. ONLY THEN does the Householder call His servants before Him to see how much EACH man has gained by trading.*

All of the household servants *appear TOGETHER in judgment at the SAME time;* and this “time” is clearly revealed to be *at the END of the present dispensation*, following the period when servants are accorded the privilege of exercising faithfulness to delegated responsibility.

Thus, Scripture *does NOT* teach that a separation of Christians occurs through a present, ongoing judgment, *for there is NO present judgment of this nature.*

NOR does Scripture teach that a separation of Christians will occur through a selective rapture, *for there will be NO selective rapture.*

Separation, according to Scripture, will occur *ONLY* at that future time when *ALL Christians (both the faithful and the unfaithful) appear before the judgment seat following Christ's return for His household servants.*

Christ is presently occupying the office of *High Priest*, *NOT that of Judge.* A judicial role falls *ONLY within the scope of His kingly office, NOT His priestly office* (to be a "King" is to be a *Judge*; and, although Christ is a King today [He was "born King" (Matt. 2:2)], He is *NOT* presently exercising that office or any facet of that office).

Christ will occupy the office and exercise the duties of King *ONLY AFTER* he concludes His present high priestly ministry.

At THAT time, He will depart the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary and come forth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. ONLY THEN will He assume a judicial role of a nature seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds.

3) The Goal of Rewards

After whatever fashion one views the Christian life during the present dispensation, *the goal of ALL activity is ALWAYS the same.*

Responsibility has been accorded household servants during the present time with a view to their being elevated and assuming responsible positions in the kingdom yet future. Training and testing occur today, with the outcome realized in the kingdom which follows.

This was graphically illustrated by the Apostle Paul through his viewing the Christian life as *a race, with the runner striving to acquire one or more crowns.*

Being elevated into the position of ruler and assuming a place as co-heir with Christ on His throne will require a crown. And Scripture connects *the crown and the throne after such a fashion that one CANNOT be separated from the other.*

Rulers do NOT govern apart from a throne, and uncrowned individuals do NOT sit on a throne.

Being invested with a crown portends an ascent to the throne, and being denied a crown or one's crown being taken portends

either a denial of or a removal from the throne (*cf.* Ps. 89:39, 44; Zech. 6:11, 13; Rev. 2:10, 26, 27; 3:21; 6:2; 12:3; 13:1, 2; 19:12, 16).

Five crowns which it is possible for Christians to win are mentioned in the New Testament.

These five crowns are:

- 1) "The incorruptible crown" (I Cor. 9:24-27).
- 2) "The crown of rejoicing" (I Thess. 2:19, 20).
- 3) "The crown of righteousness" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).
- 4) "The crown of life" (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
- 5) "The crown of glory" (I Peter 5:2-4).

These crowns, portending positions of power and authority with the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" during the coming age, are being held out before Christians during the present time.

These are the proffered rewards to be won in the present *race of the faith* as one exhibits faithfulness to the responsibility which has been delegated to him.

And these crowns, to be given strictly on the basis of faithfulness to present responsibility, will be worn by those Christians accorded responsible positions of power and authority in the kingdom.

Enter Thou into the Joy of Thy Lord

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith [*lit.*, 'the faith' (not 'our faith,' with the article used as a possessive pronoun)]; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1, 2).

"...I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21b, 23b).

"...have thou authority over ten cities...over five cities" (Luke 19:17b, 19b).

The "author and finisher of our faith ['the faith']," the One

we are to *look unto* as we *look away* from anything which could cause distraction, is described in Heb. 12:2 as One Who had His eyes fixed on “the joy that was set before him” as He bore “our sins in his own body on the tree” (I Peter 2:24).

Christ viewed Calvary within the framework of THAT which lay beyond Calvary.

The ignominious shame and indescribable sufferings of Calvary had to come first. *There was NO other way.*

But beyond Calvary lay something else, described as “the joy that was set before him.”

Following His resurrection, when Christ confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and other disciples later in Jerusalem, He called attention to a constant theme throughout the Old Testament Scriptures: Israel’s Messiah was going to *FIRST suffer these things* [events surrounding Calvary] *and THEN enter into His glory* (Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45).

Joseph, a type of Christ, first suffered prior to finding himself seated on Pharaoh’s throne ruling “over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 37:20ff; 39:20ff; 41:40ff).

Moses, another type of Christ, first suffered rejection at the hands of his people before being accepted by them. Rejection was followed by his experiences in Midian, and acceptance was followed by the people of Israel being led out of Egypt to be established in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 2:11ff; 3:1ff; 12:40, 41).

Passages such as Ps. 22-24 or Isa. 53:1ff (Israel’s future confession concerning that which had happened to the nation’s Messiah *BEFORE* He entered into His glory [Isa. 52]) present the same order — *sufferings, and THEN glory.*

This is the *ONLY* order one finds in Scripture, and enough is stated about Christ’s sufferings preceding His glory in the Old Testament that He could say to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus:

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have spoken:*

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25, 26).

Peter, James, and John on the Mount with Christ during the time of His earthly ministry “saw his glory” (Luke 9:32), and Peter, years later, associated the “glory” which they had seen at this time with “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:16-18).

Christ’s “glory” thus has to do with that day when He will occupy the throne and rule the earth (as Joseph on the throne ruling Egypt [always a type of the world in Scripture]).

In Heb. 12:2, the wording is slightly different. In this passage we’re told that Christ’s “sufferings” preceded “the joy [rather than ‘the glory’]” set before Him.

This though, in complete keeping with Old Testament prophecy, is clearly a reference to “sufferings” preceding Christ’s “glory” and to Christ looking beyond the sufferings to the time when he would enter into His glory.

In the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14ff, Christ referred to individuals who would enter into positions of power and authority with Him as entering “into *the joy of thy Lord*” (vv. 21, 23; cf. Luke 19:16-19). Thus, the “sufferings” and “joy” of Heb. 12:2 follow the same order and refer to the same two things as the “sufferings” and “glory” found elsewhere in Scripture.

In keeping with the theme of Hebrews though, there’s really more to the expression, “the joy that was set before him,” than just a general foreview of Christ’s coming glory. The thought here is much more specific.

Note in the parable of the talents that “the joy of thy Lord” is associated with Christ’s co-heirs entering into positions on the throne with him.

And the key thought throughout Hebrews, stating the matter another way, is that of Christ “bringing many sons unto glory” with Him (2:10).

This is what Christ had His eyes fixed upon when He endured the humiliation, shame, and sufferings of Calvary (cf. Heb. 1:9). Christ, at Calvary, fixing His attention on “the joy that was set before him,” fixed His attention on that day when *He and His co-heirs, firstborn sons in that day, forming His bride, would ascend the throne together in His kingdom.*

1) Endured the Cross

Note something, and note it well!

It is *because of Calvary* that unredeemed man, “dead in trespasses and sins,” can be “quickened” (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). It is *because of Calvary* that unredeemed man can be eternally saved, changing once and for all his eternal destiny.

BUT, Christ looked beyond Calvary. He looked at *the purpose* for man’s redemption, *a purpose* which would allow redeemed man to realize the highest of all possible callings.

Christ viewed the events surrounding Calvary more in the light of Col. 1:13. Christ’s finished work on Calvary allows God to take fallen man and bring about a change in sides with respect to the kingdom. This allows God to take a man who is “dead in trespasses and sins,” produce life in that individual, and place him in the very sphere for which he had been created in the beginning.

And being more specific, Christ, through His work at Calvary, provided redemption for His bride, the one who would reign as consort queen with Him. Christ’s finished work at Calvary (Gen. 22) allows the Holy Spirit to presently call out a bride for the Son (Gen. 24). “Sufferings” *MUST come FIRST*, but the “joy” toward which Christ looked *MUST follow the sufferings*.

Christ “endured the cross,” knowing these things, with His eyes accordingly fixed on “the joy that was set before him.”

And man today, viewing Calvary apart from also looking ahead to this same “joy,” is *NOT* looking upon Christ’s redemptive work the same way Christ viewed it at all.

2) Despised the Shame

Christ, “for the joy that was set before him,” *NOT ONLY endured the Cross BUT He despised the shame*. The word “for” in this verse — “for the joy” — is a translation of the Greek word *anti*, which refers to setting one thing over against another. The “joy” was set over against the “shame.” Christ considered the ignominious “shame” associated with Calvary a thing of little consequence compared to the “joy” which lay ahead. *The ignominious “shame” was NO small thing, BUT the “joy” was so much greater that, comparatively, Christ could ONLY look upon the former as of little consequence.*

Events of that coming day when Christ and His bride would ascend the throne together so far outweighed events of the present day that Christ considered being spat upon, beaten, and humiliated to the point of being arrayed as a mock King as things of comparatively little consequence.

He then went to Calvary, paying the price for man's redemption, so that even the very ones carrying out His persecution and crucifixion could one day (through believing on Him) find themselves in a position to participate in the "joy" set before Him.

And a Christian should view present persecution, humiliation, and shame after the same fashion Christ viewed these things at Calvary. This is what Peter had in mind when he penned the words, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

The Epistles of I, II Peter have been written to encourage Christians who are being tested and tried; and this encouragement is accomplished through offering compensation for the sufferings which one endures during the present time. And this compensation — rewards having to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son's kingdom — will be *EXACTLY* commensurate with present sufferings (I Peter 1:6, 7; 4:12, 13; cf. Matt. 16:27).

(Note that the "sufferings" in I, II Peter, resulting in future rewards, appear in connection with *an inheritance* "reserved in heaven" and *a salvation* "ready to be revealed in the last time," which is "the salvation of your souls" [I Peter 1:4, 5, 9].)

Following the example which Christ set at Calvary, a Christian should place the *coming* "joy" over against the *present* "sufferings" and consider the sufferings of little consequence compared to "the just recompense of the reward" which lies ahead.

And he should not think it strange when he finds himself suffering for Christ's sake, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (cf. II Tim. 3:12; I Peter 4:12).

THIS is the NORM for the Christian life!

Rather, he should rejoice, knowing that as a *partaker of Christ's sufferings*, he is *ALSO going to be a partaker of Christ's glory* (I Peter 4:13).

11

THOU WICKED, SLOTHFUL SERVANT

Reward Exactly Commensurate with Service

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reaped where I sowed not, and gathered where I had not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath” (Matt. 25:24-29).

“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

And he said unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him" (Luke 19:20-26).

The Lord's dealings with His household servants as set forth in the parables of the talents and the pounds are often treated by expositors as pertaining to issues surrounding one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation. However, such is *NOT ONLY* theologically impossible *BUT* teachings of this nature also serve to do away with that which is actually taught.

NO one — saved or unsaved — will EVER stand in a future judgment where the issue at hand will involve eternal salvation or eternal damnation. In EVERY future judgment, the matter of one's possession or nonpossession of eternal salvation will be a PAST issue, with judgment having ALREADY occurred:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned ['judged']: but he that believeth not is condemned ['judged'] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

This is the reason that a judgment relative to eternal salvation *CANNOT* await either the believer or the unbeliever. *Both have ALREADY been judged relative to this matter* (ref. Chapter X in this book).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [e.g., Gen. 22; Ex. 12; Isa. 53] (I Cor. 15:3b).

God has ALREADY judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary. The one believing has had the penalty for sin paid on his behalf; the one not believing will have to one day pay the penalty himself. *BUT, regardless, judgment for sin is PAST.*

The believer will one day stand before Christ and be judged on the basis of *works* (or, the matter can be stated as "faithfulness," for works emanate out of faithfulness [Heb. 11:1ff; James 2:14-26]). And this judgment will be with *the Millennium in view* (I Cor. 3:11-15; I Peter 5:1-10; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

The unbeliever, as well, will one day stand before Christ and be judged on the basis of *works* (“faithfulness,” of course, *CANNOT* be an issue, with works emanating out of faithfulness, as with the believer; but there will be works nonetheless, though works completely separate from faith). And this judgment will be with *the eternal ages in view* (Rev. 20:11-15).

The salvation question — the question regarding one’s eternal salvation or damnation — will be a closed, finished matter at the time of judgment (for the saved, or the unsaved), *for NO man can EVER be judged on the basis of that which God has already judged* (the same concept, in another frame of reference, is absolute protection from “double jeopardy” in the U.S. Constitution).

“Salvation” will be an issue in the Lord’s reckoning with His servants as set forth in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, *but NOT eternal salvation*. The matter at hand concerns the Lord’s dealings with His household servants on the basis of works emanating out of faithfulness in view of a future salvation — *the salvation of the soul*.

One’s presently possessed salvation — the salvation of the spirit — places him within the house, allowing him to occupy a responsible position under and for the Householder. *It is his faithfulness or unfaithfulness to delegated responsibility for which he will one day answer, NOT his presence in the house*.

In the parables of the talents and the pounds, the “wicked and slothful” servant *was NOT ONLY* present in the house *BUT* he occupied a household position of the same order as those held by the “good and faithful” servants. *He was one of the Householder’s Own servants* and had been assigned responsibility within the house, just as those servants who later proved to be faithful.

The distinguishing difference in the servants had to do with *their attitude toward delegated responsibility*. *Two were shown to have been faithful, and one was shown to have been unfaithful*.

To press the issue beyond this point and attempt to read eternal salvation and eternal damnation into the matter does violence to the Scripture, *NOT ONLY* at this point *BUT* elsewhere as well.

In both parables, the Householder’s servants were accorded responsible positions *in the SAME location* (in the house) *during the*

SAME time (the present dispensation); and this was followed by the servants rendering an account *at the SAME time* (the end of the present dispensation) *in their Lord's presence* (before His judgment seat).

That is, *ALL of the stewards served together in the SAME place at the SAME time, and they were ALL called forth together to render an account in the SAME place at the SAME time.*

Major problems exist on every hand when one attempts to view issues in these parables as pertaining to eternal salvation or eternal damnation. Such would necessitate the Lord calling saved and unsaved individuals alike into His service to exercise responsible positions in His house, followed by *the SAME saved and unsaved individuals one day appearing before Him, at the SAME time and place, to render an account.*

Then, there's the matter of the basis upon which household servants are judged following their being called forth to render an account. *Judgment occurs SOLELY on the basis of faithfulness to delegated responsibility.*

Then, beyond that is the matter of the outcome of this judgment, which has to do with the servants either being commended and rewarded or being rebuked and suffering loss *in relation to occupying or being denied positions in the kingdom which the Householder had gone away to receive, NOT in relation to eternal salvation or eternal damnation.*

An individual *MUST* be a servant in the house before responsibility can be delegated by the Householder. The impossibility of an unsaved person occupying a position of this nature can be easily seen by understanding Matt. 24:45 in the light of I Cor. 2:14.

In Matt. 24:45, a household servant was given the responsibility of providing food for other servants in the house. He was to give them "meat in due season," which has to do with *Biblical doctrine, particularly doctrine surrounding the Lord's return and the coming kingdom* (ref. Chapter II in this book). Other servants in the house were to understand and receive this message, something, which according to I Cor. 2:14, *would NOT be possible for unsaved individuals.*

(Contextually, I Cor. 2:14 has to do with saved man following his soulical nature; applied to unsaved man, the soulical is all that he has.)

The things of the Spirit of God are *foolishness* to the “natural man [‘soulical man’ — a person whose life is dominated by his soul].” Such a person *CANNOT* receive *NOR* understand the things of the Spirit, for they are “spiritually discerned.”

An unsaved person *does NOT* possess a saved human spirit into which the message can be received; *NOR* does he possess the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead him “into all truth” (*cf.* John 3:6; 16:13-15; James 1:21).

Then, to say that eternal salvation and eternal damnation are in view in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds necessitates the saved and unsaved appearing in judgment together, something completely foreign to the teaching of all Scripture. A judgment of the saved and unsaved together, at the same time, would require God to judge (at least after some fashion) once again that which He has already judged. Since such *CANNOT* occur, Scripture *ALWAYS* presents separate judgments for saved and unsaved individuals, with the matter at hand *ALWAYS* an issue other than eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

As previously seen, the issue surrounding one’s eternal destiny in any future judgment will ALWAYS be a settled, closed matter before judgment occurs.

Further, those rendering an account in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds either experience commendation and reward or experience rebuke and loss, with the faithful being accorded positions with Christ in the kingdom and the unfaithful being denied positions of this nature. And to read eternal verities into such a division would *NOT ONLY* suggest that all Christians will be found faithful at the judgment seat *BUT* it would also suggest a parallel equivalence between positions with Christ in the kingdom on the one hand and one’s eternal destiny on the other.

I Corinthians 3:11-15 clearly reveals that Christians at the judgment seat will experience both “reward” and “loss,” a thought perfectly in line with that which is revealed in both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds; and the subject matter in both parables clearly has to do with “reward” or “loss” in relation to *the kingdom*, *NOT with acceptance or rejection relative to one’s eternal destiny.*

The “wicked and slothful” *servant* in each parable, unlike the “good and faithful” *servants*, failed to properly exercise delegated responsibility in the house. *Failure* resulted in “loss.” *NOT ONLY* was that which had been committed to his trust, belonging to the Householder, taken from him and given to another, *BUT* he was rejected for a position in the kingdom which the Householder had gone away to receive.

Unfaithfulness to delegated responsibility in the house during the Householder’s absence resulted in his being denied responsibility in the kingdom following the Householder’s return (cf. Luke 16:10, 11).

This is what the text CLEARLY states, and this is what MUST be understood from the text.

Called into His Presence

After Christ receives the kingdom from His Father, He is going to return for His household servants. They will be called forth from the earth to appear in His presence in the heavens. The “dead in Christ” will be raised, followed by those “which are alive and remain” being removed with the resurrected believers “to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thess. 4:13-17; I Cor. 15:51-57).

The Greek word *atomos*, translated “moment” (I Cor. 15:52), is used to show the length of time which the Lord will use to accomplish the removal of His servants from the earth (both the dead and the living) into His presence in the heavens above the earth. *Tomos* means “division,” and the prefix “*a*” negates the word. Thus, *atomos*, from which the English word “atom” is derived, means “indivisible.”

This word in I Cor. 15:52 refers to *time which has been reduced to such a minute point that it can be reduced no further*. The reference is to events occurring during a space of time comparable to what we might think of as a microsecond (one-millionth of a second), events occurring so suddenly and swiftly that the brevity of time which will be involved is something completely beyond our finite comprehension.

The removal of Christians at the time of the rapture is *NOT* the same as the servants being called before Him to render an

account as set forth in Luke 19:15. Appearing in Christ's presence at the time of the rapture is *a general appearance*, but appearing in His presence at the judgment seat is *a more specific, personal appearance*. The latter follows the former.

At the time of the rapture, the present dispensation will have run its course. God's purpose for this dispensation — to acquire the rulers who will occupy responsible positions with Christ in the kingdom, forming His bride — will be complete.

ALL Christians (both the dead and the living) will then be removed from the earth, with a view to bringing matters surrounding the present dispensation to a close. They will be removed into Christ's presence at the time of the rapture and subsequently appear before Him, on an individual basis, to ascertain "how much every man had gained by trading" (Luke 19:15).

The text in both the parables of the talents and the pounds specifically states that *each servant — both faithful and unfaithful — personally "came" to the Lord in successive order to render an account concerning his stewardship* (Matt. 25:20, 22, 24; Luke 19:16, 18, 20).

The man with the five talents came and *stood ALONE in his Lord's presence*, and the Lord dealt with him *ALONE, on an individual basis*.

Then, in successive order, the man with the two talents came forth, followed by the man with the one talent.

In each instance, the Lord's dealings with those in His house *were the SAME* — dealings of *a personal, individual nature*.

And *the SAME sequence of events* within the Lord's judicial dealings with His servants is seen in the parable of the pounds.

At the future judgment of Christians, as set forth by these parables, each Christian — both faithful and unfaithful — will come forth, *separate from ALL others, and stand ALONE in his Lord's presence in order to respond to ONE matter: faithfulness as a household servant to delegated responsibility*.

The Christian will *personally* answer to the One Who had previously purchased him with His Own blood (allowing him to occupy a position as a servant in the house), placed him in a certain position with a specific calling (a particular position of servitude in the house), and provided him with the means whereby he could carry out the task at hand (provided him with His Own goods).

The Christian *can THEN EITHER show how he had used the talents/pound to the Householder's advantage* (Matt. 25:20, 22; Luke 19:16, 18), *OR he can attempt to show cause why he had NOT used the talents/pound to the Householder's advantage* (Matt. 25:24, 25; Luke 19:20, 21).

In either instance, the Lord's judgment will be perfectly just and righteous. Findings at the judgment seat of an individual nature will THEN determine positions with Christ in the kingdom of a like individual nature.

Commendation and reward or chastisement and loss will be completely commensurate with EXACTLY how the Christian either managed or mismanaged the Lord's goods within the scope of his individual calling.

Receiving a Just Recompense

In both the parables of the talents and the pounds, the distinguishing difference in servitude, revealed in the Householder's presence, in each instance, had to do with the servant's *use or nonuse of his Master's goods through trading and trafficking during the time of his Master's absence.*

In each parable, two servants were shown to have brought forth different amounts of increase through *a proper use of their Master's goods*, while another servant was shown to have brought forth no increase at all through *nonuse of his Master's goods.*

The servant bringing forth NO increase, in each parable, had stored his Master's goods for safekeeping in a place where they could NOT be used. The servant in the parable of the talents had buried his Master's goods in the ground (Matt. 25:25), and the servant in the parable of the pounds had placed his Master's goods inside a napkin (Luke 19:20).

In BOTH instances, NO increase could be realized.

The use of the Master's goods (resulting in an increase) or the nonuse of these goods (resulting in NO increase) is the central thought around which everything in both parables moves at the time the Master's servants are called into his presence to render an account.

A misuse of these goods does not really come under consideration per se, though this is something which Christ had previously discussed in the presence of His disciples, recorded in the parable

of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1ff. In this parable, the *SAME* appearance before his Master, the *SAME* accounting relative to his stewardship, and the *SAME* end result were experienced by the servant through *misuse* as experienced by the servants through *nonuse* in the parables of the talents and the pounds.

In the parable of the unjust steward, word had reached the Householder concerning His steward's misuse of His goods; and the steward was subsequently called into the Householder's presence to render an account concerning his stewardship. His mismanagement, brought out into the open while *in his Master's presence*, resulted in rebuke and impending loss.

He was about to lose his stewardship. That which had previously been committed to his trust was about to be removed from his possession; *and, once removed, he could NO longer act on his Master's behalf within the house* (Luke 16:1, 2).

EXACTLY the same principle can be seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds. In each parable, the servant who had hidden his Master's goods for safekeeping and *NOT* used them was called into his Master's presence to render an account. And that which was revealed, while *in his Master's presence*, resulted in *rebuke and loss*.

His stewardship was supposed to have been the means through which he could have successfully run the race of the faith. He, as a household steward in possession of a portion of the Householder's goods, *through faithfulness to his calling (his particular place of responsibility in the house)*, could bring forth an increase (bring forth fruit).

This would allow him to win a crown, *qualifying him to be elevated into the position of co-heir with his Master in the kingdom which He had gone away to receive*.

However, *failure in stewardship* would mean rejection as ruler. The unfaithful steward would be rejected as unfit to occupy a position in the kingdom, with chastisement following (note the one received alongside or the one turned away [rejected] in the first of the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse).

The Lord will *NOT* take lightly the matter of household servants, through unfaithfulness, spurning proffered positions as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom which He has gone away to receive.

Unfaithful servants will receive treatment of such a harsh nature at the hands of their Lord that many students of the Word turn completely away from the thought of saved individuals being in view. To them it is unthinkable that the Lord would extend treatment of this nature to redeemed individuals, His Own people.

This is the main reason that issues surrounding one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation are often read into the parables of the talents and the pounds, with the unfaithful servant in each parable being looked upon as an unsaved individual.

However, the question concerning how the Lord could extend treatment of the nature revealed in these parables to one of His Own *does NOT address the issue at all*. The question asked in a proper Biblical framework would have to be just the opposite:

“HOW could the Lord be perfectly just and righteous WITHOUT extending treatment of this nature to one of His Own?”

IF faithfulness calls for commendation and reward (which it does), then unfaithfulness *MUST* call for rebuke and loss (which it does). The inverse of one *MUST* be true relative to the other, *else the Lord's perfect justice and righteousness could NOT be satisfied*.

The Servants' Plea

The unfaithful servants in both the parables of the talents and the pounds are seen pleading their individual cases before the Lord in a frank, open, and unrestrained manner. *NOTHING appears to be held back as they relate the reasons for the particular course of action which each had taken while a servant in the Master's house in charge of a portion of the Master's goods*.

The appeal by each servant is *NOT* that of trying to hide or cover up what he had done. To the contrary, it is just the opposite. They both appeal to their Lord, while in His presence, *in an open, almost brazen manner, relating EXACTLY what had occurred*.

In that coming day, *NOTHING will be held back*. *ALL things will be “naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”* (Heb. 4:13). Christ spoke openly during His earthly ministry, saying *NOTHING* in secret (John 18:20); and He would

expect the same from His servants, though the situation is often quite different today.

However, the day is coming when *NOTHING will remain hidden or be kept secret* (Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17). Paul, in his message to those at Rome, stated,

“...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

(Paul proclaimed both *the gospel of the grace of God* and *the gospel of the glory of Christ* [Acts 20:24-27; II Cor. 4:3, 4]; but the reference in Rom. 2:16 can pertain only to *the gospel of the glory of Christ*, for *NO* future judgment of the “secrets of men” awaits individuals in relation to *the gospel of the grace of God*.

Paul’s gospel in this passage [and elsewhere in the Pauline epistles where the expressions “my gospel” or “our gospel” appear] *MUST* be looked upon as the good news concerning the coming glory of Christ [“meat in due season”], to be proclaimed *to stewards in the house* [cf. Matt. 24:45; Rom. 16:25; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-6; I Thess. 1:5; II Thess. 2:14; I Tim. 1:11; II Tim. 2:8].

This gospel [good news] deals with the message concerning present faithfulness of household servants in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom [e.g., note the context of II Tim. 2:8].)

The unfaithful servants in both the parables of the talents and the pounds accused their Lord of the same thing in order to justify their nonuse of the goods entrusted to their care. They accused their Lord of reaping a harvest and deriving an increase through the labors of others, which was true but completely one-sided from their perspective.

They looked upon the entire matter from a carnal, humanistic viewpoint, rejecting spiritual values. They envisioned their Lord doing these things *ONLY for self-gain*, and they gave *LITTLE or NO thought to the revealed REASON* (which they should have known) concerning why the Householder was conducting affairs in His house after this fashion.

The Householder had a relationship with His servants of this nature for a *PURPOSE involving FAR more than just self-gain*,

as supposed by the unfaithful servants. The Householder, *for a particular REASON*, had delivered His goods to His servants and assigned them responsible positions in the house, with a view to their bringing forth an increase (bringing forth fruit).

Servitude during the present day of trials and testings would be *the MEANS through which the Householder could one day elevate His servants from positions in the house to positions in the kingdom.*

They, through faithfulness in lesser responsibility would be allowed to show themselves qualified to assume greater responsibility (cf. Matt. 25:29; Luke 16:10-12; 19:26); and upon the Householder's reception of the kingdom and return in possession of the kingdom, *those servants having shown themselves qualified could be elevated FROM household servants of their Master TO co-heirs with their Master.*

The self-gain which the Householder would eventually realize was that of gaining co-heirs, companions (which will form His wife as well), to ascend the throne with Him in His kingdom; and the Householder had reaped where He had not sown and gathered where He had not dispersed in order to bring this to pass.

The work in the fields was to be accomplished *by the servants, using the Master's possessions* (everything belonged to the Master of the house); and the work was to be accomplished *on the Master's behalf.*

The Householder, through this MEANS, was extending to His servants the privilege of one day being elevated to the highest position of honor and glory one could possibly receive. They would be recompensed for their labors by being elevated into positions as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom.

The fruits of their labors would NOT ONLY benefit the Householder BUT the servants as well, with the Householder and His servants both realizing the results together.

The Lord's Response

The thought of labor for the Lord during the present day in view of co-heirship with Him during that coming day is *something which appears to have completely escaped the attention of the unfaithful servants in both parables.*

The unfaithful servants *could NOT* grasp at all what their Master had in mind through requiring labor on His behalf. Ignorance of His plans and purposes for both present and future times *NOT ONLY* led them into gross error *BUT* it caused them to govern their activities as household servants after such a fashion that they mismanaged the Householder's affairs, ultimately resulting in their being rejected for positions in the kingdom.

There was *NO increase for their Master*, resulting in *NO advancement for them*.

The profitless servants in both parables *had FAILED* to properly conduct their affairs within the scope of delegated household responsibility. They *had NOT* used the talent/pound to bring forth an increase (Matt. 25:27; Luke 19:23 ["usury" in these verses is the translation of a Greek word meaning *interest on an investment*]).

The Lord's sharp rebuke, followed by chastisement, was occasioned by the dual ramifications resulting from the servants' disobedience. Appearing in the Lord's presence as profitless servants meant:

- 1) *No gain for the Lord.*
- 2) *Loss for the servants.*

Because of the servants' failure, those portions of the Lord's goods which had previously been entrusted to their care were taken from them and given to servants who had already been judged and had been shown to have brought forth increases. Such would add to these faithful servants' possessions, *which could ONLY positively reflect on their positions in the kingdom*.

The thought *can ONLY* be that servants coming into possession of *additional amounts of the Lord's goods* through this means will receive *additional responsibility in the kingdom*.

The principle governing this matter is set forth very succinctly in both parables:

"For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance [which can only be a reference to the servant bringing forth an increase of that which his Master had entrusted to him, resulting

in an 'abundance' in the kingdom]; but from him who *has nothing* [NO increase of the Master's goods entrusted to him], even what he has shall be taken away [which, in view of that realized by the faithful servant through a reception of the unfaithful servant's goods, *could ONLY* refer to the responsibility that could have been his in the kingdom through realizing the purpose for his salvation and particular calling]" (Matt. 25:29, Weymouth).

"I tell you that every one who has anything, more shall be given; and from him who has not anything, even what he has shall be taken away" (Luke 19:26, Weymouth).

The faithful servant will have already been elevated into a position as co-heir with his Lord at this time, and an increase in the Lord's goods, of the nature this would produce, is shown in the parable of the pounds to be directly related to *increased responsibility in the kingdom* (Luke 19:16-19).

Numerous positions in the kingdom which the Lord has gone away to receive *MUST be filled upon His return*. The failure of a servant to show himself qualified *will NOT* leave the position which could have been his unfilled. The Lord will simply assign that portion to another servant, adding to the responsibility which that servant will have already been accorded.

When all factors are considered, *NO* other meaning can really be derived from the Lord's action of taking from one servant and giving to another servant at the judgment seat.

Concluding Remarks:

A major problem in Christian circles today is the widespread ignorance concerning the relationship between *the present dispensation* and *the coming kingdom*. Pastors, over the years, *have NOT* dispensed "meat in due season"; and the ultimate result will be the appearance of multitudes of Christians before the Lord, at His judgment seat, in the same condition as the unfaithful servants in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds.

Ignorance of the Lord's plans and purposes can very easily result in a present mismanagement of household affairs, which will result in disqualification for a future management of affairs in the kingdom.

12

CAST OUTSIDE

Finality of Unfaithful Household Service

“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30).

The nature of the treatment awaiting the unfaithful servant at the hands of his Lord in the parable of the talents has been completely misunderstood by numerous Christians, leading them to conclude that the Lord was dealing with an unsaved person at this point in the parable.

The Lord sharply rebuked the unfaithful servant, commanded that the talent be removed from his possession, and then commanded that he be cast into the darkness outside.

The main problem which most Christians have with the latter part of this parable is the ultimate outcome of the Lord's dealings with His unfaithful servant — the fact that he was cast into *the darkness outside*. “Outer darkness,” within their way of thinking, is to be equated with *Hell* (seen in an ultimate respect as the final abode of the unsaved in *the lake of fire*).

And knowing that a Christian *can NEVER* be cast into Hell — for the one in whom the Spirit has breathed life possesses a life which *can NEVER* be taken from him — those equating “outer darkness” with *Hell* are left with no recourse other than to look upon the Lord's dealings with the unfaithful servant and the Lord's dealings with the unsaved as synonymous.

It probably goes without saying that had the Lord treated the unfaithful servant in a somewhat less severe fashion, very few Christians reading this account would ever think about questioning the individual's salvation, for the response of the unfaithful servant would be perfectly in line with verses such as I Cor. 3:13, 15 and would have presented no indication, in their way of viewing matters, of the status of his salvation.

But the Lord's sharp rebuke, the removal of the talent from his possession, and his being cast into outer darkness constitute what many view as *a sequence of events which could NOT possibly befall a Christian*.

Such an outlook on this passage though is completely contrary to any Biblical teaching on salvation by grace through faith (seeing the possession or nonpossession of this salvation through man's works, actions).

Or, such an outlook on the passage, as well, ignores both the text and the context, resulting in an interpretation which, contextually, is completely contrary to that seen in this passage or in any other similar passage in Scripture.

And by forcing erroneous interpretations of the preceding nature on this passage, the door will have been opened for all types of erroneous interpretations in related passages of Scripture.

Just to name a few, the door will have been opened for the introduction of:

- 1) Erroneous views pertaining to salvation by grace through faith.
- 2) Erroneous views on the purpose for the present dispensation.
- 3) Erroneous views on the coming judgment of Christians.
- 4) Erroneous views on the perfect justice and righteousness of God.

Then, if introducing erroneous views of the preceding nature in different realms of Biblical doctrine through a forced, noncontextual interpretation is not enough in and of itself, something else should be noted.

Such an outlook on the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 will, as well, close the door to the correct interpretation of this complete, overall passage — *the ONLY one which can possibly be derived through any plain, contextual reading of the passage*.

Error will have fostered error and closed doors, leaving the student of Scripture adhering to erroneous systems of thought and in *a position where he CANNOT possibly understand aright the Lord's present and future dealings with His household servants*.

A Darkness on the Outside

The expression “outer darkness” only appears three times in Scripture, and all three are found in Matthew’s gospel (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Luke, in his gospel, alludes to outer darkness in a parallel reference to Matt. 8:11, 12 (Luke 13:28, 29) but does not use the words. He simply reduces the expression to “without” (ASV).

In the Greek text, both Matthew and Luke use the compound word *ekballo*, which means to “cast out” (*ek*, “out”; *ballo*, “to cast”). Following the use of this word, the place into which individuals in these passages are cast is given in both gospels.

In Matthew’s gospel, the place where individuals are cast is described as “into outer darkness [*lit.*, from the Greek text, ‘into the darkness, the outer’; or as we would normally say in an English translation, ‘into the outer darkness’].”

(In the Greek text there are definite articles before both the noun and adjective, with the adjective following the noun — “the darkness, the outer.” In a construction of this nature, through a repetition of the article, there is an emphasis placed on the adjective, “outer.”

It is not just any darkness, but a particular darkness. It is a particular place of darkness outside and contiguous to a particular place of light.)

Then, in Luke’s gospel the place where individuals are cast is described as “without,” or “on the outside.” That is, through comparing Matthew’s account, they are cast “without,” or “on the outside” of a place of light; and this place, in Matthew’s gospel, is described as a place of darkness.

Accordingly, many Christians in that day will find themselves in the darkness outside the lighted banqueting hall (Matt. 22:9-13); and these same Christians will, as well, subsequently find themselves outside the scope of the rule and reign of the One Who said, “I am the light of the world” (Matt. 8:11, 12; 25:19-30; John 9:5).

And the expressed thoughts by both Matthew and Luke locate this place immediately outside and contiguous to the region from which those in view are cast. Both passages refer to the same place — *a particular region of darkness outside a particular region of light.*

The place from which these individuals are cast is one of light.

This is possibly illustrated best in Matthew chapter twenty-two. In this chapter, “outer darkness” is used to describe conditions in an area immediately outside the festivities attendant a royal wedding. Such festivities in the East would normally be held at night, inside a lighted banquet hall. On the outside there would be a darkened courtyard; and the proximity of this darkened courtyard to the lighted banquet hall would correspond perfectly to the expression, “the outer darkness,” or “the darkness on the outside.”

A person in the banquet hall, cast into the courtyard, would be cast out of the light into the darkness. This is the picture, and this is *EXACTLY* what will occur in relation to that which is being dealt with in Matt. 8:11, 12; 22:1-14; 25:14-30 — *i.e., cast out of the marriage festivities and out of the kingdom which follows.*

“Outer darkness” is simply one realm immediately outside of another realm, called “outer darkness” by way of contrast to the “inner light.” Those cast out are removed from a sphere associated with *light* and placed *outside* in a sphere associated with *darkness*.

Following events of the judgment seat of Christ, servants having been shown *faithful* and servants having been shown *unfaithful* will find themselves in *TWO entirely different realms.*

Servants having been shown *faithful* will find themselves among those forming the bride of Christ and in a position to attend the marriage festivities. And these individuals *will subsequently be positioned on the throne as co-heirs with Christ, forming the consort queen who will reign with the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”*

Servants having been shown *unfaithful* though *will NOT* form part of the bride; *NOR* will they be allowed to attend the marriage festivities; *NOR* will they be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ. Rather, they will find themselves *in a place outside the realm where these activities occur.*

They *will be removed from the inner light* (be removed from a place associated with events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ which follows) and *be cast into the darkness outside* (be cast into a place separated from events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ which follows).

This is *the way* “outer darkness” is used in Scripture; and this is *the ONLY way* the expression is used.

ANY teaching concerning “outer darkness,” remaining true to the text, *MUST approach the subject ONLY from a textual and contextual fashion of this nature, recognizing the subject matter at hand.*

Contextual Considerations

The Gospel of Matthew outlines a sequence of events pertaining to Israel and the kingdom, which anticipate the existence of the Church, after a manner not seen in the other three gospels.

The central message in Matthew’s gospel, leading up to the events surrounding Calvary, pertains to:

The offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel.

The rejection of the kingdom by Israel.

The removal of the kingdom from Israel.

These things, in turn, anticipate the Church subsequently being called into existence to be *the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*

Matthew presents God dealings with *the house of Israel* in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, with *the house* ultimately being left “desolate” because of the nation’s rejection (Matt. 23:2, 13, 38); and Matthew also anticipates God dealings with *a house* separate and distinct from Israel in relation to the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 16:18, 19; 21:33-43; 24:40-25:30). It is within this framework, along with individual contextual settings, that Christ’s three references to “outer darkness” are to be understood in Matthew’s gospel.

1) Matthew 8:11, 12

The first appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in Matt. 8:11, 12, and the text and context both have to do with *the message of the kingdom*. Jesus had just finished a lengthy discourse to His disciples, commonly called “The Sermon on the Mount” (chs. 5-7), which is *a connected discourse dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens* (cf. Matt. 5:1-12; 6:33; 7:13-27).

Preceding the Sermon on the Mount, the subject matter concludes in chapter four with the message concerning the kingdom. Then, the subject matter continues in chapter eight, following the Sermon on the Mount, with this same message concerning the kingdom.

The message at this point actually picks up where chapter four left off — with supernatural, physical healings, and later with supernatural provision. These supernatural, physical healings appear before, in conjunction with, and after the text concerning the kingdom of the heavens and outer darkness in chapter eight. Then accounts of supernatural material provisions for the people follow (e.g., Mark 6:32-44; John 2:1-11).

These miraculous works of Christ among the Jewish people were *SIGNS having to do with “the kingdom”* (cf. Isa. 35:1ff; Matt. 4:23-25; 10:5-8; 11:2-5). They constituted the credentials of the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom and pointed to that which Israel could have — *supernatural healing* (for both the people and the land [cf. II Chron. 7:14; Isa. 1:4-9]), *supernatural provision, and the restoration of the theocracy* — *IF the nation would repent*.

It is within a contextual setting such as this that “outer darkness” first appears in Matthew’s gospel.

Actually, the subject arose after a Roman centurion expressed faith that Christ could heal his servant (who was sick at home) by just speaking the word. Christ used the faith exhibited by this Gentile to illustrate a contrasting lack of faith exhibited by those in Israel. Christ said that He had “not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (v. 10). He then spoke of a day when *many* would come “from the east and the west” and “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens.”

That is, a separate and distinct group of individuals, taken mainly from the Gentiles, would exhibit faith on the same order as this centurion and enter into the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

But those to whom this heavenly sphere of the kingdom naturally belonged, because of their lack of faith, would be excluded. The “sons of the kingdom [those forming the nation of Israel]” would be “cast out” (vv. 11, 12).

The entire scene anticipated Matt. 21:43 where the heavenly portion of the kingdom was taken from Israel in view of a sepa-

rate and distinct group ultimately occupying that which did not naturally belong to them. This group would be comprised of those who, at that time, were *aliens, without hope, and without God (i.e., Gentiles)*. But “in Christ Jesus” these conditions would change. They would be “made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

And, through the immersion in the Spirit, those having been “made nigh by the blood of Christ” would become *new creations* “in Christ,” part of *the one new man*, who is “neither Jew nor Greek [‘Gentile’].” Then, through being “in Christ” (Who is Abraham’s Seed), they, through this positional standing, would become “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise [the heavenly portion of the promise given to Abraham and his progeny, which was taken from Israel]” (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:17, 18, 26-29; Eph. 2:12-15; cf. Gen. 22:17, 18).

2) Matthew 22:1-14

The second appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two. The contextual usage in this passage is in association with *the kingdom of the heavens and the activities attendant a royal wedding*.

Contextually, the “King” and His “Son” (v. 2) *can ONLY be identified as God the Father and God the Son*. The “servants” and “other servants” (vv. 3, 4) sent “to call them that were bidden [Israel]” *would then refer to the ministries of the prophets*.

This offer, however, was spurned, and the messengers were ill-treated. Then, last of all, God sent His Son — with John as His fore-runner — saying, “They will reverence my Son” (*ref. previous parable [21:33-39]*). *BUT*, although God had stated that they would reverence His Son, *ALL things* which the Jewish people would do were known to Him from the beginning; and this, as foretold, *was NOT to occur*.

Jesus, near the conclusion of His earthly ministry, rode into Jerusalem astride “an ass,” presenting Himself as Israel’s King in fulfillment of the prophecy in Zech. 9:9 (Matt. 21:1-11). And He, in complete accord with the parable, was rejected, culminating in His crucifixion and death (*cf. Matt. 21:37-39; 22:1-6; 23:1-36*).

The rejection and impending crucifixion of God’s Son was the final blow. The kingdom was *THEN* taken from Israel and

subsequently extended to a separate and distinct nation (cf. Matt. 21:40-46; 22:8-10; I Peter 2:9, 10). And, though God used this new nation — *the one new man* “in Christ” — to re-offer the kingdom to Israel (seen in the Book of Acts), rejection on Israel’s part continued (with the re-offer of the kingdom being withdrawn about 62 A.D., at the time of Paul’s announcement in Acts 28:28).

Individuals comprising this new nation are synonymous with those from “the east and the west” in Matt. 8:11 and those out in “the highways” in Matt. 22:10. And *unbelief on Israel’s part*, followed by *others being brought in to be the recipients of that which naturally belonged to Israel*, leads up to the mention of “outer darkness” in both passages.

At this point though there is a difference in the two passages. Outer darkness in Matt. 8:12 is reserved for “the sons of the kingdom [a reference to Israel in this text],” but outer darkness in Matt. 22:13 is reserved for an individual appearing at the marriage festivities attendant the wedding of God’s Son. He appeared without the proper attire required for entrance into these festivities. He appeared without a wedding garment (*ref.* Chapter IV in this book).

Israel had previously been mentioned in verses three through seven, with the man appearing without a wedding garment being identified with those called *after* the kingdom had been taken from Israel (cf. vv. 8-10, 14). This man would, thus, be among those from “the east and the west” in Matt. 8:11 or those found in “the highways” in Matt. 22:10.

To reconcile that which is taught in these two passages, bear in mind that at the time of Matt. 8:11, 12 the kingdom of the heavens *had NOT yet been taken from Israel*.

But Matt. 22:1-14 was given *at a time following the announcement concerning the removal of the heavenly portion of the kingdom from Israel*, with the anticipated offer of the kingdom being extended to another group (Matt. 21:33-43).

In both passages it is *the recipients of the offer* of the kingdom of the heavens who find themselves associated with the place called “outer darkness.”

In Matthew chapter eight, the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was open *to Israel ALONE*, even though the allusion was made to

others being brought into this kingdom. But at the time of the events in Matthew chapter twenty-two, the announcement had previously been made concerning this part of the kingdom being taken from Israel; and *NOW* the new recipient of the proffered kingdom was in view (though this new recipient — *the one new man* “in Christ” [I Peter 2:9-11] — was yet to be brought into existence [Matt. 16:18]).

Thus, “outer darkness” is used *the SAME way* in both passages. It is used *in association with those to whom the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was, at THAT time, being extended.*

3) Matthew 25:14-30

The third appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in a tripartite, connected discourse which deals with *the Jews, the Christians, and the Gentiles* — the Olivet Discourse.

The inception of Christianity *awaited a future date* at this time; but the discourse, given *following* Christ’s statement that He would build His Church and *following* the removal of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel, anticipated *the one new man* “in Christ” being brought into existence (Matt. 16:18, 19; 21:33-43; cf. Eph. 2:12-15).

To place the third appearance of outer darkness in Matthew’s gospel in its proper perspective, note a succinct review of the Olivet Discourse over the next several pages, with a particular emphasis on the Christian section of the discourse:

The first part of the discourse (24:4-39) deals exclusively with events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation and with the return of the nation’s Messiah at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, and the nation MUST NOW pass through the Tribulation and await her Messiah “in the way of thy judgments” (Isa. 26:8).

The second part of the discourse (24:40-25:30) deals with the new recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. The emphasis throughout this section is upon present faithfulness in view of a future time of reckoning, anticipating the kingdom.

The third part of the discourse (25:31-46) deals with judgment upon living, saved Gentiles following Christ’s return at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

These would be Gentiles saved mainly under the ministry of the 144,000 of Rev. 7, 14 (*cf.* Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 20:4-6), who proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom” to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation (*cf.* Matt. 24:13, 14; Rev. 12:5, 17).

In this fashion, the three sections of the Olivet Discourse reveal God’s dealings with the three segments of mankind — *Jew, Christian, and Gentile* — either during and/or at the conclusion of the present dispensation.

In the Jewish section of this discourse (24:4-39), God’s dealings with Israel are restricted to the time during and immediately following the coming Tribulation.

The reason for this is very simple: Israel has been set aside during the present time while God removes from the Gentiles “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14).

The TIME when God will deal with Israel once again awaits the completion of His purpose for the present dispensation.

This is *the reason WHY* the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse begins with Israel in the Tribulation. This section begins at the point where God resumes His dealings with Israel once again.

In the Christian section of this discourse (24:40-25:30), unlike the Jewish section, God *DOES* deal with a people during the present time — a time preceding the Tribulation. And those with whom God is presently dealing are the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens *following* Israel’s rejection of this offer, which is *EXACTLY* what is in view in this section of the Olivet Discourse.

In the Gentile section of this discourse (25:31-46), ONLY the Gentiles are in view. God, at that time in the future when these events occur, will have completed His dealings with Israel and the Church.

God will complete His dispensational dealings with Christians *FIRST* (*which includes judgment*); and this will be followed by God completing His dispensational dealings with Israel (*which includes judgment*).

THEN, God will deal with saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation, in judgment, immediately prior to His 1,000-year reign over the earth (which will be 1,000 years of judging — ruling the nations with “a rod of iron”).

With the whole of the Olivet Discourse succinctly summarized in the preceding manner, note where the third and last mention of outer darkness in Matthew's gospel is seen.

This third and last mention of "outer darkness" *lies at the end of the parable of the talents, which concludes the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.*

However, "outer darkness" is *NOT* restricted to the parable of the talents in this section. The parables about *one taken, another left* (24:40-44), *the Householder and His servant* (24:45-51), *the ten virgins* (25:1-13), and *the talents* (25:14-30) are interrelated after such a fashion that the expression "outer darkness" *MUST be looked upon as applicable in parallel passages in all four.*

Four parables follow the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the "days of Noah" (the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah have to do with *Israel and the nations DURING the Tribulation, NOT today*).

And the main thought throughout this entire section of Scripture (the parable of the fig tree, the days of Noah, and the four subsequent parables) centers around *the due season, watchfulness, and readiness* for the Lord's return, introduced in the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the days of Noah (the two passages which set the tone for the four parables which follow).

In the parable about one taken, another left, *watchfulness*, having to do with *faithfulness*, resulted in *the person being ready for the Lord's return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding positive action by the Lord when He did return.*

But *unwatchfulness*, having to do with *unfaithfulness*, resulted in *the person NOT being ready for the Lord's return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding negative action by the Lord when He did return.*

And though Christians *will NOT* see the days referred to by the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah, they can see signs on every hand, having to do with both, that the world is rapidly approaching that time referred to by the prophets and these verses in Matthew's gospel.

A remnant of Jews is back in the land (resulting from a Zionist movement), existing as a recognized nation among nations;

and sexual promiscuity, as portended by Noah's day, has become rampant in our day (though not an open participation of angels in the matter; such awaits the days of the coming Tribulation [both heterosexual and homosexual, for that which occurred during the days of Lot are to mark this time as well]).

Then in *the parable of the Householder and His servant*, the thought drawn from that which has preceded centers around *faithfulness* in dispensing "meat in due season." If the servant *remains faithful*, he will be made ruler over all the Lord's goods; but if the servant *becomes unfaithful*, he will be "cut asunder" and be appointed "his portion with the hypocrites."

(Note that by comparing Matt. 24:45-51 with the parallel section in Luke 12:42-46, it is clear that *ONLY one servant* is in view throughout.

The servant EITHER remains faithful OR he becomes unfaithful.)

The parable of the ten virgins immediately following begins with the word "Then," pointing back to the parable of the Householder and His servant. The parable of the ten virgins covers the same subject matter, providing additional information from a different perspective; and this parable concludes in a similar fashion by showing *that which awaits both those who are ready and those who are NOT ready at the time of the Lord's return.*

The parable of the talents, immediately following the parable of the ten virgins, is introduced in the Greek text by the words *Hosper gar* ("For just as"); and these two introductory words tell the reader that the parable about to follow is just like the parable which has preceded.

In a respect, these two words tell the reader that an explanatory parable for the parable of the ten virgins (and the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins as well) is about to be given.

Verse fourteen, introducing the parable of the talents, should literally read:

"For it [referring back to the parable of *the ten virgins*, and, consequently, the parables of *the Householder and His servant* and *one taken, another left*] is just as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods."

The parables, “one taken, another left,” “the Householder and His servant,” “the ten virgins,” and “the talents” *ALL center around the same basic issues. ALL present different facets of EXACTLY the same thing.*

(Note that “a parable,” by its own definition — from the meaning of the word itself [from the compound Greek word *parabole* (*para*, “alongside”; *bole*, “to cast”)] — is simply one truth placed alongside of a previous truth to help explain the previous truth [*i.e.*, a truth cast alongside (which would necessitate a previous truth)].

In the parable of the talents, a truth is placed alongside of a previous truth [in this case, the parable of the ten virgins, along with the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins (since all deal with the same basic issues)]. And the truth being placed alongside [the parable of the talents] is being given to help explain [provide additional light for] that which Christ had previously stated in the preceding three parables.)

In the parable about *one taken, another left*, the thought from the Greek text regarding the English translation, “one shall be taken, and the other left” (vv. 40, 41) should be understood in the sense of “one shall be received alongside [alongside the Lord], and the other turned away [turned away by the Lord].” The two verbs used in the Greek text are: *paralambano* and *aphiemi*.

Paralambano is a compound word, meaning “to take alongside,” “to receive alongside” (*para*, “alongside”; *lambano*, “to take,” “to receive”); and *aphiemi* means “to send away,” “to turn away.”

The entire scene is judgmental, as evident from the succeeding three parables — all dealing with different facets of the same thing. In the parable, comparing it with the other parables, *faithfulness* resulted in a position alongside the Lord, but *unfaithfulness* resulted in the forfeiture of this position.

(The rapture is *seen ONLY indirectly* in this parable or in any one of the three succeeding parables. Thoughts in these parables have to do with events preceding the rapture and events following the rapture, *NOT* with the rapture itself per se.)

In the parable of the Householder and His servant, *faithfulness* would result in the servant being positioned as ruler over all the Lord’s goods, but *unfaithfulness* would result in the servant (the

same servant) being assigned a place with the hypocrites.

In the parable of the ten virgins, *the faithful servants* (wise virgins) were allowed to enter into the marriage festivities, but *the unfaithful servants* (foolish virgins) were excluded from these festivities.

And in the parable of the talents, *the faithful servants* were allowed to enter into “the joy” of their Lord, but *the unfaithful servant* was cast into the darkness outside (i.e., cast into a place of darkness outside Christ’s “joy,” having to do with the things surrounding His reign over the earth, which would include the preceding marriage festivities [cf. Luke 19:16-19; Heb. 12:1, 2]).

Understanding the interrelationship between these parables and comparing them with the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two, it becomes clear that “outer darkness” is associated with all four.

This is the place where the unfaithful servants found themselves in all of the parables, even though the expression is used only in the parable of the talents. *ONE* parable describes the *place*, and *ALL four* describe *conditions* in this place — whether in a place outside the marriage festivities or outside Christ’s subsequent reign.

Comparing the parable of the Householder and His servant with the parable of the talents, note that positions of rulership are in view in both parables.

ONLY the faithful will be apportioned these positions. The unfaithful *will NOT ONLY* be denied positions in the kingdom *BUT* they will be apportioned their place “with the hypocrites,” where there will be “the weeping and the gnashing of teeth [an Eastern expression signifying deep grief]” (Matt. 24:51; 25:30, ASV); and this place is referred to as “the outer darkness” (ASV) in the latter parable.

(Note the same expression in Matt. 22:13 in connection with “the outer darkness” [cf. also Matt. 8:12]. Also note that the unfaithful among the ten virgins were excluded from the marriage festivities [25:10-12], as was the man without a wedding garment [who was bound and cast into “the outer darkness”] in Matt. 22:11-13.)

He Went Out...

“But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace...

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.'

But he denied before them all, saying, 'I know not what thou sayest'...

And again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the man'...

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, 'I know not the man.' And immediately the cock crew.

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, 'Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' And he went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:58, 69-75).

"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully...

If we suffer ['patiently endure'], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:5, 12).

Possibly the best illustration given in Scripture showing the downward path which it is possible for a Christian to take, ultimately leading into the place of darkness outside the light, is the recorded actions of the Apostle Peter immediately preceding Christ's crucifixion.

Christ had informed His disciples that *ALL* of them would "be offended" during the next few hours because of Him; and from that time until the time Peter is seen weeping bitterly because of his offense, there are *seven steps* recorded in Scripture showing how Peter was brought into the condition in which he found himself at this time (Matt. 26:31-75).

(The word "offended [Gk., *skandalizo*]" in Matt. 26:31 has to do with *something causing opposition, which can result in a fall*. This is the same word used in Matt. 13:21, which, according to Luke 8:13, can result in *a falling away, apostasy*.)

The words "fall away" in Luke 8:13 are the translation of *aphistemi* in the Greek text. This is the verb form of the noun *apostasia*, from which we derive our English word "apostasy."

Apostasia, a compound word, simply means, "to stand away from." The word *stasis* means "to stand"; and the preposition *apo*, prefixed to the word, means, "from." Thus, *apostasia* has to do with standing away from something else [e.g., standing away from a previously held position, belief, etc.].

The disciples — and particularly Peter — in this respect, because of opposition, *apostatized*. That is, they stood away from the position which they had previously held with Christ, which is *EXACTLY* what Christ had alluded to in Matt. 26:31ff.)

Step One: Peter *would NOT* accept Christ's statement concerning that which the disciples were about to do, as he, on a previous occasion, *had NOT* accepted Christ's statement and had to be rebuked by the Lord (Matt. 16:21-23). Peter then made his boast that *he would NEVER* allow opposition to bring about a falling away (cf. James 4:13-15); and in response to Christ's subsequent statement that he would deny Him three times that very night, Peter responded, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"; and the other disciples responded likewise. *THEN*, during the next few hours, *NOT ONLY* would Peter *deny Christ* "three times," *BUT* "all the disciples" would *forsake Him and flee* (Matt. 26:33-35, 56).

Step Two: In this boast by Peter and the disciples — not allowing opposition to bring about a falling away — *a strong negative* is used in verse thirty-three and *a double negative* is used in verse thirty-five, reflecting back on the strong negative in verse thirty-three.

The use of a double negative (quite common in the Greek New Testament) is for emphasis, making the negative thought very emphatic.

Note an English translation of Matt. 26:33, 35 worded after a fashion to show this:

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, *yet will I NEVER be offended*...

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, *yet will I never, no not ever* [reflecting back on, in a very emphatic manner, the strong negative in v. 33], *deny thee*. Likewise said all the disciples."

Christ then took Peter, James, and John, separate from the other disciples, into a particular place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Once in this place, He told them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." However, when Jesus went aside to pray, rather than watching, the disciples fell asleep. The Lord then had to rebuke them *for NOT watching*

and praying that they “enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26:36-41).

Step Three: Judas had betrayed Christ to the religious leaders of Israel; and he then led “a band of men and officers,” dispatched by the religious leaders, into the garden to take Christ. Seeing them, Peter drew his sword and resorted to the arm of flesh, to human means, to accomplish his previous boast.

Any battle in which the disciples found themselves engaged was to be *spiritual*, and it is *EXACTLY* the same for disciples today.

But Peter sought to force his will on others *through physical means* (the day when Christ will take the sceptre and “strike through kings” was future at that time, and it remains future today [Ps. 110:1ff; cf. Ps. 2:1ff]). In this respect, Peter’s actions were completely out of place, as similar actions by Christians would be today).

(Christians can exert *far more power* through prayer than through any fleshly means possible.

In fact, the chasm separating the two is as far as the East is from the West. One has to do with accessing Divine, infinite power; the other has to do with accessing humanistic, finite power.)

Peter, in his vain, fleshly effort, cut off an ear of one of the high priest’s servants. But Jesus, completely rejecting his actions, told him to put up the sword; and He then healed the servant, restoring his ear (Matt. 26:47-55; Luke 22:50, 51).

Step Four: Then the actions of Peter and the other disciples continued accordingly. The man of flesh had gained the ascendancy, and *the disciples were NOW doing EXACTLY what they had previously stated would NOT occur*. Though having previously boasted of that which they would do, the disciples were found sleeping when they should have been watching and praying; and Peter had resorted to the arm of flesh, as he sought to carry out his previous boast.

And this was followed by all the disciples, again, *doing EXACTLY what they had previously stated would NOT occur*:

“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56b; cf. v. 35).

Step Five: Peter then began to follow Christ “afar off.” He had taken the sword, and it was about to result in his ruin. He

had resorted to the arm of flesh and was in the process of reaping that which he had sown (*cf.* Matt. 26:52; Gal. 6:7, 8). Because of his previous actions, the closeness which had been his in Christ's inner circle, along with James and John, was *NOW gone* (*cf.* Matt. 17:1; 26:37, 58).

Step Six: When Jesus was taken into the high priest's palace for questioning by the religious leaders, Peter, following Him "afar off," remained outside in the courtyard. Rather than identifying himself with Christ on the inside, he sat down with the enemy on the outside (Matt. 26:69; Luke 22:54, 55).

Step Seven: Peter's past actions *had NOW* led him to the final point in his fall. When accused of being one of Christ's disciples, Peter denied his Lord on three separate occasions, followed by the cock crowing a second time just as Christ had foretold.

And the Lord, being led at that moment past Peter unto "the hall of judgment" (John 18:28), turned and *looked* upon Peter, awakening him to the stark reality of that which he had done (Matt. 26:34, 69-74; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:61).

The Lord's look in this passage was far more than a brief glance. The word used in the Greek text (*emblepo*) points to Christ fixing His eyes upon Peter in an intently searching manner. Peter came under *the Lord's scrutiny* for his actions, causing him to remember that which had previously occurred.

Peter then "went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62).

(The scene can *ONLY* be *judgmental* in nature, portraying that future day when Christ, with "eyes as a flame of fire," will judge those who are His, as they stand in His presence [*cf.* Rev. 1:14].)

Peter, because of his past actions, following Christ's intently searching look, found himself *outside, weeping bitterly*. And the whole of the matter surrounding Peter presents the whole of the matter surrounding unfaithful Christians and outer darkness.

Peter, because of his actions, following Christ's intently searching look, found himself in a place comparable to the place which Scripture describes as "the outer darkness," where there is "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (*cf.* Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30, ASV).

APPENDIX I

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

A Discourse Pertaining to the Proffered Kingdom

“And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...”
(Matt. 5:1, 2).

Christ’s opening discourse to His disciples, and others (*cf.* Matt. 5:1, 2, 7:28) — commonly known and referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount” — was given very early in His ministry (Matt. 5-7). This discourse appears shortly after Christ had taken up and continued the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, previously introduced and proclaimed by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1ff; 4:17ff).

But *EXACTLY WHAT* kingdom was John the Baptist referencing when he appeared, proclaiming, “Repent ye [a plural pronoun, referring to the entire Jewish nation]; for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...”?

And, following John, this same message was *proclaimed to Israel* by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy during a period lasting over three years, *permeating the entirety of ALL things during this time.*

Aside from the manner in which the kingdom is referenced throughout Matthew’s gospel — “the kingdom of the heavens” (appearing thirty-two times) — identifying the kingdom is actually quite easy, *leaving NO possibly room for doubt concerning EXACTLY WHAT kingdom is being referenced.*

WHAT kingdom was in view beginning the Old Testament, referenced as “the earth,” which had been created, then reduced to a ruin (Gen. 1:1, 2a)?

WHAT kingdom was in view throughout the six days recording the restoration of the ruined kingdom (Gen. 1:2b-25)?

WHAT kingdom was in view when man was created to rule the restored kingdom (Gen. 1:26-28)?

WHAT kingdom was in view when the incumbent ruler (Satan) brought about man's fall so that man would be disqualified to rule this kingdom?

And, following this down to the gospels, 4,000 years later, *WHAT kingdom* was in view when the second Man, the last Adam, appeared in Satan's presence for forty days and nights to be tested by the one who had brought about the first man, the first Adam's fall, showing the incumbent ruler that He, as the second Man, the last Adam, was fully qualified to take the kingdom and rule?

(With background material on the proffered kingdom from the O.T., the temptation account immediately preceding Christ's ministry, *should, ALONE, quell ANY doubts concerning WHAT kingdom was in view.*

The proffered kingdom in the gospel accounts, inseparably associated with the second Man, the last Adam's temptation at Satan's hands, *could ONLY have been the SAME kingdom which the first man, the first Adam, had been brought on the scene to take and rule [Gen. 1:26-28], the same kingdom in view when Satan brought about man's fall, preventing man from taking the kingdom [Gen. 3:1ff].*

[Note Satan's repeated conditional statement in the temptation account — "If thou be the Son of God" (Matt. 4:3, 6). "Sonship" implies rulership. *ONLY sons can rule in God's kingdom, whether angels (present), or man (future).*

The temptation account in the gospels is the antitype of that seen 4,000 years earlier in Gen. 3. The incumbent ruler, Satan, in both instances, was confronted by the One brought on the scene to take the sceptre and replace him on the throne.

Also note "Sonship" referenced concerning Christ's identity in Peter's confession in Matt. 16:16, or in the reason for signs in John's gospel [(John 20:30, 31), which would reflect on the reason for all the signs throughout the gospels

and Acts]), or even in John 3:16 (*ref. the author's book, The Acts Period, Ch. V, pp. 66, 67*).

Apart from understanding the temptation account in the synoptic gospels in the preceding manner, Christ's temptation at Satan's hands *makes NO sense whatsoever*.

However, seeing the entire matter correctly, the temptation account *fits perfectly within the structure of and message in the gospels*.

Thus, the kingdom proclaimed by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy is clearly seen to be *the kingdom which had been restored for man [Gen. 1:2b-25], the kingdom which Satan and his angels ruled at that time, ruled 2,000 years ago, and continues to rule today* [*ref. the introduction to this book*].

And the governing powers in this kingdom rule from the heavens over the earth [Eph. 3:9, 10; 6:12], a kingdom referred to thirty-two times in Matthew's gospel as "the kingdom of the heavens.")

Then, to add further clarification, take all of this to its ultimate goal. Project matters out to a time 2,000 years beyond events seen in the gospel accounts, to a time still future today.

WHAT kingdom will Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, take and rule in that coming day, seen in Rev. 11:15 (corrected translation)?

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of this world became that of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Throughout, it is the SAME kingdom, introduced at the beginning in Genesis chapter one, a kingdom seen permeating the whole of Scripture!

Thus, the message, begun by John and continued by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy had to do with a call for national repentance, with a view to the proffered kingdom of the heavens.

And the Sermon on the Mount, which Christ gave very near the opening part of His ministry, *had to do with the Jewish people and this kingdom, NOT with Israel and salvation by grace*.

Succinctly stated, the Sermon on the Mount, given at the outset of Christ's ministry, is *a connected discourse dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens.*

NO PART of this discourse has anything to do with salvation by grace. The COMPLETE discourse has to do with the message being proclaimed, a message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens — a message proclaimed to Israel in the past and, as will be shown, a message to be proclaimed to Christians today.

Christ delivered the Sermon on the Mount specifically to His disciples (though others following Him were present) after he had left the multitudes and had gone up into a mountain ("a mountain" signifying *a kingdom*, as later seen in Matt. 17:1-5 [cf. Isa. 2:1-5; Dan. 2:31-45]).

The things seen in this message were applicable to Israel during the offer (in the gospels) and re-offer (in Acts) of the kingdom of the heavens.

However, because of the Jewish people's rejection of the message and the Messenger, the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43), and an entirely new entity was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Acts 2:1, 2; I Peter 2:9, 10).

And aside from the re-offer of the kingdom during the subsequent twenty-nine-year Acts period, the things dealt with in the Sermon on the Mount *could NO longer be applicable to Israel.*

Beyond this time, throughout the remainder of the dispensation, these things *could ONLY be applicable to the one brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.*

Thus, the Sermon on the Mount, having to do with the kingdom of the heavens, *can ONLY be applicable to Christians today.*

(To properly understand the Sermon on the Mount in its correct perspective, an individual *MUST* have some understanding of the central message dealt with in the gospels, into Acts, and then into the epistles.

For information covering the complete panorama of this message seen throughout the New Testament — continued from the O.T., beginning in Genesis — refer to the author's three nooks, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, The Acts Period, and From Acts to the Epistles.*)

APPENDIX II

MATTHEW 7:21-23

*Entrance into, Exclusion from the Kingdom
NOT Entrance into, Exclusion from Eternal Life*

“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils [‘demons’]? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [‘lawlessness’]” (Matt. 7:21-23).

(Matthew 5-7, commonly referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount,” succinctly stated, is a *connected discourse dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens, NOT with the gospel of grace.*

For a proper understanding of the setting and place which this discourse occupies in Matthew’s gospel and how *it CAN ONLY be applicable to Christians during the present day and time*, refer to Appendix I in this book.)

“Many” among those (Christians alone following the events of Acts 28:28) to whom the offer is presently being extended to occupy positions of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom will, in that coming day, find themselves *rejected for one of these proffered positions.*

WHY?

Matthew 7:21-23 is one of *seven* similarly-worded sections of Scripture, *teaching exclusion from the kingdom in this respect.*

The other *six* can be found in Matt. 5:20; 18:3; 19:23, 24; Luke 18:17; John 3:3, 5; I Cor. 6:9, 10.

And *ALL* these sections of Scripture — having to do with *saved individuals*, *NOT* the *unsaved* — *MUST* be understood and interpreted relative to the Christian's calling, his present responsibility, and his future accountability.

A travesty in Scriptural interpretation today is the use of Matt. 7:21-23 (or, for that matter, also particularly vv. 13, 14, 24-27) as a message directed to the *unsaved*, for *this* serves *NOT ONLY* to *destroy* the *true message* *BUT* *open the door* for other types of error as well.

These verses have to do, *NOT* with the message of salvation by grace, but with *EXACTLY* what the text states — a message concerning a future entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens.

Such could *ONLY* be quite clear to anyone who is willing to accept *NOT ONLY* a plain reading of the text *BUT* also that clearly taught by the text.

Calling Jesus “Lord”

The words “Lord, Lord” (vv. 21, 22), uttered by individuals in the passage who are denied entrance into the kingdom, *constitute an expression peculiarly related to saved individuals*.

According to I Cor. 12:3, “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.”

An *unsaved* person, separated from the Holy Spirit, has *NO understanding of the things of the Spirit*. *These things are alien to the natural man* (the only type nature which he possesses). *Jesus is NOT his Lord; and, apart from the Spirit of God, he DOES NOT, he CANNOT, so acknowledge Christ*.

(An *unsaved* person can, in a meaningless way, utter these words [*Jesus is Lord*]; but he *CANNOT* acknowledge Jesus as His Lord, as seen in Matt. 7:21, 22.

A person *CANNOT* do this *apart from his actions emanating from above, apart from being brought forth from above*. And actions of this nature *would, accordingly, be possible ONLY for the saved* [cf. Matt. 16:15-17].)

Prophecy in Jesus Name

A three-part question is asked by those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord in verse twenty-two, and the construction of this question

in the Greek text (using the negative “ou,” governing all three parts) designates that *these individuals expected a positive rather than a negative response from the Lord.*

That is, the manner in which the question was asked reveals that *these individuals expected to hear the Lord say:*

“Yes, you have prophesied in my name; yes, you have cast out demons in my name; and yes, you have performed many wonderful works in my name.”

These individuals had been proclaiming a message and performing works — even miraculous works — believing that these things were being done in the name of the Lord.

However, the Lord’s response revealed that *such was NOT the case at all.*

These individuals had, *unknowingly*, been deceived by false teachers, with miraculous works emanating from the only source possible — *the demonic world.*

As a result, Christ’s answer to their question (v. 23) was *NOT at all* in keeping with the response which they expected.

Prophesying in the name of the Lord in this passage is simply proclaiming things *supposedly* in accord with the Word of God.

The meaning of the word for “prophesy” in the Greek text (*propheteuo*) is “to speak forth.” The meaning could go beyond this and refer to prophetic (futuristic) utterance itself, but that is not what the text and context are dealing with.

This is the same word (in its noun form [*prophetes*]) previously translated “prophets” in verse fifteen, as well as in II Peter 2:1.

Note that in II Peter 2:1 the “false prophets” are identified as “false teachers,” synonymous with the false teachers in Jude.

This entire thought surrounds a servant of the Lord (who himself is an apostate, or has been misled by the apostates) teaching things which are contrary to the Word of God.

Casting Out Demons, Wonderful Works

Casting out demons and doing many wonderful works, *supposedly* in the name of the Lord, is perhaps best exemplified dur-

ing the present time by the actions of Christians involved in the Charismatic Movement, for this is *EXACTLY* what these individuals are doing.

The Charismatic Movement can be properly understood *ONLY* in the light of Scripture, which would account for its widespread deception.

Christians *NOT* knowing the Word can *ONLY* find themselves ripe for deception. And, seemingly, the Charismatic Movement appears to be a movement which exists because of the simple failure of Christians to understand the proper place which signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in the Word of God.

However, the crux of the matter goes far beyond this. Matthew 7:15-23 reveals an apostate element resulting from the ministry of false teachers associated with a movement of this nature.

Signs, wonders, and miracles, such as were in evidence during the earthly ministry of Christ and for the first three decades of the existence of the Church, *are inseparably related to two things:*

- a) *Israel*
- b) *The Kingdom*

That would be to say, God *MUST* be dealing with *Israel* in relation to *the kingdom* for signs, wonders, and miracles, of a true nature, to exist.

Israel WAS dealt with in relation to the kingdom in the past (relative to the Old Testament theocracy; then relative to the offer of the kingdom of the heavens at Christ's first coming, continued during the Acts period), *IS NOT being dealt with in this manner today* (during the present dispensation while God is calling out a bride for His Son, with Israel set aside), *but WILL BE dealt with after this fashion in the future* (during the Tribulation and the Messianic Era).

Accordingly, signs, wonders, and miracles (*inseparably associated with Israel and the kingdom in Scripture*) *WERE* in evidence in the past, *CANNOT BE* in evidence today, *but WILL BE* in evidence once again in the future.

Thus, *there can be NO present manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts.*

Those in the Charismatic Movement, claiming to be manifesting these signs during the present time, *CANNOT POSSIBLY* be

doing so. That being seen in the movement today can NEITHER be a continuation of NOR a restoration of the signs, wonders, and miracles evident during Apostolic days.

The Charismatic Movement has been singled out because of the movement's widespread influence on what is viewed as Christendom in the world today (crossing all denominational lines, Protestant and Catholic alike).

But, again, suffice it to say, *ANY manifestation of supernatural powers in the world today — in ANY movement (e.g., Pentecostalism), Christian or non-Christian — can have NO association whatsoever with supernatural powers exhibited during Apostolic times.*

Such powers, from a Biblical standpoint, simply CANNOT exist today. These powers were for a time past, and are reserved for a time future (during the Tribulation and Millennium, when God once again deals with Israel relative to the kingdom [Isa. 35:1-6; Rev. 11:1ff; 13:1ff]).

Consequently, any movement in the world today purporting to exercise these powers is *NOT AT ALL* what it claims to be.

Manifestations of supernatural powers in the world today are NO indication that these powers emanate from God.

One thing which is almost completely overlooked is the fact that *Satan possesses supernatural powers which can be exhibited through man.* Scripture associates the *working of Satan* with “all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:9, 10).

Satan's efforts through the manifestations of his powers are always directed toward *ONE goal — to deceive.* He is introduced into the affairs of the human race in this fashion, comprising a *first-mention principle* which remains constant throughout Scripture (Gen. 3:1-7; Ex. 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7; Matt. 24:24; Eph. 4:14; I Tim. 2:14; Rev. 13:13, 14). And the deception of individuals in Matthew chapter seven (vv. 21-23), by the false teachers (vv. 15-20), *constitutes a warning to everyone involved in comparable activity today.*

Because of Israel's past rejection of the proffered kingdom, the nation was set aside for a dispensation. God then called into existence an entirely new entity — *the one new man* “in Christ” (Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-15; 3:1-6; II Cor. 5:17) — and the kingdom of the heavens is being offered *to this new man, COMPLETELY APART from “signs”* (I Cor. 1:22).

But note something about *ALL* of this. *Though true Biblical signs as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts CANNOT EXIST TODAY, “signs” of some type DO EXIST.* And since “signs” have a peculiar relationship to *Israel and the kingdom*, any *pseudo-manifestation of them today could ONLY be similarly related.*

And, with Israel set aside, in relation to “signs,” *THE KINGDOM ALONE remains, with ONLY ONE KINGDOM presently existing* — the kingdom under Satan, which will one day become “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 12:15, ASV).

Thus — *IF* the associated relationship is correct, *which evidently could ONLY be the case* — *individuals involved in any movement associated with signs, wonders, and miracles today are, in reality, producing works relating to a kingdom which is presently DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED to the kingdom of Christ; and any manifestation of supernatural powers would have to emanate from and relate to THIS KINGDOM.*

Thus, it is little wonder that those referred to in Matt. 7:21-23 are called *workers of iniquity* and will, in the coming day of reckoning, be denied entrance into the kingdom, after it has become “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.”

The words, “I never knew you” (v. 23), referring to the supernatural works previously performed, have been misunderstood by many individuals over the years. In reality, God in His omniscience *knows everyone and everything.* Thus, all expressions of this nature in Scripture *MUST* be understood as *relative expressions*, pertaining to the subject matter at hand.

An expression of this nature used relative to eternal life, for example, would limit those whom God *knows* to the ones in possession of eternal life. God *knows ALL the others* (the unsaved), *but NOT* relative to eternal life.

However, the subject under discussion in Matt. 7:21-23 is *NOT eternal life at all.* This subject has to do with “doing the will of the Lord” — in relation to and resulting in *fruit-bearing* — with a view to *entrance into the kingdom.*

In that coming day, *Christ will KNOW ALL Christians, BUT He will NOT KNOW ALL Christians relative to the matter at hand* (cf. Matt. 25:9-13).

(Ref. the author’s article, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles.”)

APPENDIX III

HEIR OF ALL THINGS

*Before, from the Foundation of the World
The One Whom Israel Rejected
The One Whom Christians Can Accept*

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1, 2).

When Christ returns to the earth it will be as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Christ, at His first appearance, at the time of His incarnation, was born “king of the Jews” (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:2); and He will return to exercise that position at His second appearance (Rev. 19:11-16).

Completely unlike His first appearance — “in the likeness of sinful flesh [without the covering of Glory which man had lost in Eden 4,000 years earlier]” (Gen. 3:7; Rom. 8:3) — Christ will reappear with *a body enswathed in Glory, clothed in regal garments, with many diadems on His head* (the type crown showing regality).

He will reappear as *the rightful King*, ready to “judge and make war,” *not as One to be ridiculed and arrayed as a mock King by existing powers* (cf. Ps. 2:1-12; 24:1-10; 110:1-7; Matt. 27:27-31; Luke 24:26; John 1:36; Rev. 5:5-7; 19:11-16).

Christ will **NOT ONLY** reappear as “King” **BUT** He will have in His possession *the kingdom which He had gone away to receive*.

Christ’s reappearance after this fashion will mark the beginning of climactic events pertaining to God’s plans and purposes, which date back in time to the period prior to man’s existence upon earth.

In Scripture, the enacting of God's plans and purposes as they pertain to man are looked upon as occurring at two different times preceding man's creation:

- 1) "BEFORE the foundation of the world" (cf. John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; I Peter 1:20).
- 2) "FROM the foundation of the world" (cf. Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

"Foundation" is the translation of the Greek word, *katabole*, a compound word which literally means "to cast down" or "to throw down."

Kata means "down," and *bole* means "to cast" or "to throw."

The manner in which this word is used in a general sense in the expression, "foundation of the world," could describe God's past act of casting/throwing down the world (i.e., creating the world).

However, *katabole* appears to be used in a more specific sense in Scripture, referring to God's subsequent act of restoring the ruined creation in Gen. 1:2b ff rather than His initial act of creating the earth in Gen. 1:1.

In this respect, matters mentioned in the verses where this expression is used would refer to God's actions regarding His Son and man at TWO different times in history, FOLLOWING the creation of the heavens and the earth:

- 1) "Before [Gk., *pro*] the foundation of the world" (before the restoration of the ruined creation, in eternity past, which could be any time between the creation [Gen. 1:1] and the restoration of the ruined creation [Gen. 1:2b ff]).
- 2) "From [Gk., *apo*] the foundation of the world" (the time of the restoration of the ruined creation [Gen. 1:2b ff], when God began counting 7,000 years of time in relation to His Son and man as it pertained to regality and this earth).

Thus, God's plans and purposes as they pertain to His Son and man had their beginning in eternity past. The kingdom prepared for saved Gentiles "from the foundation of the world" in Matt. 25:34 had been planned in the eternal council chambers of

God at a time “*before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4-10).

Prior to God’s restorative work delineated in Gen. 1:2b ff, in eternity past, *the ages were planned around the preordained activity of the Son; and the Messianic Era is the climactic age in a series of ages.*

(At least *three ages* would be in view — one pre-Adamic and two post-Adamic.

At least *one age* [possible more] would have preceded man’s creation. During this time, Satan was placed as ruler over a newly created earth, his fall occurred, and the subsequent ruin of his kingdom followed [Gen. 1:1, 2a; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:14, 15].

Then *one age* covers Man’s 6,000-year Day, beginning with the restoration of the ruined earth for man and man’s subsequent creation on the sixth day [the one brought forth to replace the incumbent ruler, Satan].

Man’s fall though delayed, for 6,000 years, the purpose for man’s creation being realized, during which time God is performing a redemptive work relative to man [in order that man might one day realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning].

Then, the last age in this succession of ages is the 1,000-year Messianic Era, during which time God’s plans and purposes for His Son and for man will be brought to fruition, which is *the goal seen realized at the termination of all three sections of the Olivet Discourse.*)

God’s preordained activity as it pertains to the ages relating to man, along with the earth, is referred to in Eph. 3:11 and Heb. 1:2, and the respective contexts of these two verses leave no room to question that which is in view. Both point to the same thing — a succession of ages, terminating with an age in which the “restitution [‘restoration’] of all things” will occur (Acts 3:21; cf. Acts 1:6).

Eph. 3:11 should literally read:

“According to a plan of the ages which He formed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

And Heb. 1:2 should literally read:

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us in the person of His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the ages [formed the ages after a pattern in accord with the pre-planned activity of the Son within these ages]” (cf. John 1:3; Col. 1:16-18).

Verses leading into Eph. 3:11 have to do with the mystery revealed to Paul and the purpose for the present dispensation; and verses following Heb. 1:2 have to do with God bringing His Son into the inhabited world once again, but this time to exercise the rights of primogeniture as His firstborn Son.

The whole of Scripture moves toward a climactic age in which a new order of Sons will rule the earth for the express purpose of bringing ALL things under subjection to Christ, anticipating the eternal ages beyond (Rom. 8:19; I Cor. 15:24-28).

This plan was conceived and enacted “*before* the foundation of the world,” and the kingdom — the central focus of the plan — was prepared “*from* the foundation of the world.”

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