

The Time of The End

**The End of Man's Day
The Beginning of the Lord's Day**

**Volume I
(Revelation 1-4)**

**A Study about the
Book of Revelation**

Arlen L. Chitwood

The Book of Revelation can be logically divided into four main parts, with these different parts making up the subject matter in the four volumes forming this commentary set on the book.

These four parts are:

1) Revelation chapters 1-4 (Volume I).

This opening section of the book deals with the Church at the end of the dispensation, at the time of and following the rapture but preceding the Tribulation.

2) Revelation chapters 5-10 (Volume II).

This section of the book deals with Israel from the beginning of the Tribulation to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

(Revelation chapter 5, introducing the seven-sealed scroll, actually has as much to do with the Church as it does with Israel. But because of the natural flow of events from chapter five into chapter six and beyond, chapter 5 will be dealt with in Volume II.)

3) Revelation chapters 11-19 (Volume III).

This section of the book provides commentary for particular events which occur during the breaking of the seven seals of the scroll introduced in chapter five and broken, with the results of their being broken, in chapters six through ten.

4) Revelation chapters 20-22 (Volume IV).

This section of the book can be divided into two parts.

The first part (ch. 20) deals with events immediately preceding, during, and immediately following the Millennium, which include the subsequent destruction of the present heavens and earth.

The second part (chs. 21, 22), concluding the book, briefly introduces conditions and events associated with a new heavens and a new earth, conditions and events which will exist throughout the endless ages following the Millennium and the destruction of the present heavens and earth.

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Volume I
(Revelation 1-4)

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:21-23).

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; It shall come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also.

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:20-23).

Cover Photograph: NASA Photograph: Looking out from our galaxy toward numerous other galaxies, comprising a small part of a vast, Divinely created and sovereignly governed universe

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**Volume I
(Revelation 1-4)**

**by
Arlen L. Chitwood**

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By the Same Author —

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

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Foreword

The Book of Revelation is about *an opening up and making Jesus Christ fully known, which is the way that the book begins:*

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ [the opening up and making Jesus Christ fully known], which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev. 1:1).

The book, in turn, is also about an opening up and making the Word fully known, which was/is God (Rev. 1:1; 10:7):

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God [the opening up and making God fully known] should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” Rev. 10:7).

It is about an opening up and making the Old Testament Scriptures, which became flesh in the person of God’s Son, fully known (John 1:1, 2, 14; cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44; John 5:45-47).

John began his gospel account by calling attention to the Old Testament Scriptures (the written Word) being opened up and revealed *in a new and living way*, through the person of God’s Son, *the Word (God Himself) becoming flesh* (cf. II Cor. 3:6-18).

Then John began the Book of Revelation through a similar means — an opening up and making the Son fully known, which is another way of saying an opening up and making the Old Testament Scriptures fully known.

(It should go without saying that *there is NOTHING* in the N.T. that is not seen after some fashion in the O.T. If there were, the Son, at the time of the incarnation [pre-N.T.], *could ONLY have been incomplete.*)

And within this opening up and making the Son known in this book, after this manner, *three things occupy center-stage:*

1) *God's purpose for the PRESENT dispensation will be realized.* The Spirit's search for a bride for God's Son will have been completed (Gen. 24:1ff), with the Church subsequently removed and judged (Rev. 1b-3).

The bride will THEN be revealed, allowing the Son to reign, for He CANNOT reign as "the second Man," "the last Adam" without a wife (Gen. 1:26-28).

2) *God's purpose for the PAST dispensation will be realized.* Israel's repentance will be effected through the judgments of the Tribulation (Rev. 6-19a).

This, in turn, will allow God to deal with Israel relative to *national conversion, restoration to the land, the restoration of the Kingdom under the New Covenant, the destruction of Gentile world power, and the ushering in of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 19b, 20a; cf. Ezek. 36:24-38; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).*

3) *God's ultimate purpose in ALL things will THEN be realized in a two-fold respect:*

The seventh day, the seventh millennium in a septenary arrangement of days foreshadowing millenniums (Gen. 1:1-2:3) — the direction toward which ALL Scripture has moved throughout Man's 6,000-year Day — will THEN be ushered in and realized.

THEN, an endless array of ages, which will follow the Millennium and the subsequent destruction of the present heavens and earth, with a new heavens and new earth brought into existence, will be ushered in and realized

Man during the Millennium will reign both ON (Israel) and ABOVE (Christ and His bride, et al) the present earth.

Then during the eternal ages man will evidently reign OUT in the heavens, AMONG the stars (Rev. 22:1-5).

The preceding will be developed different places in the four volumes of this book.

Beginning and Continuing

As previously seen, the Book of Revelation begins with an opening statement, forming the first verse of the book. And this opening verse, as well, tells the reader how the book is structured:

The book is about an unveiling of the son through an unfolding of future events. And this unveiling of the Son was revealed to John in a certain manner shown by the word “signified.”

These things are developed in Chapter I of this first volume, with the thought continued in Chapters II and III.

The preceding is the manner in which the book begins. Then toward the end of the first chapter, one finds a verse (v. 19) which provides an outline of the book — both a two- or three-fold outline, depending on how the larger context of the verse is viewed.

In that respect, before looking at the verse, note that which precedes. Then, after looking at the verse, that which follows will be dealt with; and things, as they relate to the verse, will then be tied together.

John, after being removed from Man’s Day on earth into “the Lord’s Day” in heaven, and being projected into a future time (v. 10), was shown the complete Church at the end of the dispensation appearing before Christ in Judgment (vv. 11-16). This is developed in Chapters IV through XIV in this first volume of the book.

Then after two verses dealing with John’s reaction to witnessing this scene, followed by Christ’s words to him (vv. 17, 18), John was instructed to write (v. 19). And, that which he was told to write forms the verse in question.

Write...

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

“The things which thou hast seen” could only refer to the things preceding this verse, for that is all John had seen thus far.

Then, “the things which are,” could be understood two ways, in keeping with the two ways chapters two and three, continuing from chapter one, are to be understood:

1) “The things which are” would, first of all, have to be understood as the things which John was witnessing at that time, in the future, in “the Lord’s Day,” which would be the things which he had seen in the previous verses.

That is, in this respect, “the things which are” would be the same as “the things which thou hast seen,” with added commentary.

John had seen *the complete Church* in heaven appearing before Christ in judgment. Then, of necessity, this would have to be the primary understanding of the seven epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three, for that seen in chapter one relative to the seven Churches (Christians appearing before Christ in Judgment) could only be understood as continuing through that seen in chapters two and three.

This is evident from the way each of the epistles to the seven Churches is structured in chapters two and three. Each epistle is structured the same way — works, with a view to overcoming or being overcome. And this, as evident from the epistles themselves, is with a view to the kingdom.

2) Then, “the things which are” could have to do with a secondary manner in which chapters two and three should be understood — showing a history of Christendom relative to the Word of the Kingdom during the present dispensation.

This history would begin *with Ephesus*, which left its first love, and end *with Laodicea*, which was “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

In this respect, “the things which are,” from John’s perspective, at a future time, in “the Lord’s Day,” would reach back into the present dispensation.

Thus, Revelation chapters two and three present this dual picture (*ref. Chapter VI in this volume*). In this respect, that referenced by “the things which are” *would have to be viewed from the perspective of both the Church’s present location and John’s present location — back on earth during the present dispensation, or in the heavens following the present dispensation.*

Then, “the things which shall be hereafter [Gk., *meta tauta*, ‘after these things’]” could only refer to events beginning in chapter four where this expression (*meta tauta*) is used twice in the first verse. Thus, if understood correctly, Rev. 1:19 provides a good two- and three-way division of the book.

In Short...

In short, to properly understand the Book of Revelation, *one MUST understand WHAT this book is about and HOW it has been structured.* These things are dealt with throughout a number of introductory chapters. And the preceding material about Rev. 1:19 can be better understood after reading these opening chapters.

To present a full revelation of Jesus Christ, *with ALL Scripture seen to be about Him*, the Book of Revelation is structured like the Book of Genesis. *And that should come as NO surprise, for that structure, UNCHANGEABLY SET in the beginning, pervades ALL Scripture.*

Scripture begins in Genesis with the opening thirty-four verses *forming a skeletal, foundational framework upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests, with the whole of subsequent Scripture forming commentary, providing ALL the sinews, flesh, and skin (cf. Ezek. 37:1-6) to cloth the skeletal framework set forth at the beginning.*

Then, in the commentary section (Gen. 2:4ff), material pertaining to the Church is seen before material pertaining to Israel (the typology of Eve being formed from a part of Adam's body [ch. 2] precedes the typology of Cain and Abel [ch. 4]).

And the same thing is seen again in continuing Scripture, with Enoch (ch. 5) being removed from the earth prior to the Flood during Noah's day (chs. 6-8), foreshadowing the rapture, with Israel subsequently going through the Tribulation.

The Book of Revelation, as previously seen in both Gen. 2-4 and 5-8, *OPENS with material pertaining to the Church (chs. 1-4) BEFORE dealing with material pertaining to Israel (chs. 6-19).*

And chapter five, set between these two sections, *has to do with BOTH the Church and Israel.*

Then, note the Jewish section in the preceding (chs. 6-19). This section begins and continues *EXACTLY* like the Book of Genesis begins and continues.

There is a *skeletal, foundational framework* introducing this section. The action of the four horsemen (6:1-8) cover the complete time of Daniel's seventieth week, plus the seventy-five days in Dan. 12:11, 12, leading into the Messianic Era (v. 13).

Then Rev. 6:9-19:21 *provides ALL the sinews, flesh, and skin to clothe this skeletal framework, with the Messianic Era seen in ch. 20.*

Beyond that, there is a further division of the text in this section.

Revelation 6:9 through ch. 10 adds commentary for and ends at the same place as the first eight verses (6:1-8). Then chs. 11-19 adds more commentary and ends at the same place again.

All of this is dealt with and developed in different parts of the four volumes of this book.

Introduction

The Apostle John wrote five of the twenty-seven books comprising the New Testament (forming about twenty percent of the N.T.).

He wrote one of the four gospels, which is quite different than the other three, the three synoptics. And *THIS gospel* should be the opening book in the New Testament, *NOT Matthew*. John's gospel, unlike any one of the other three, *parallels Genesis in EVERY respect*.

John wrote three short epistles, which are quite different than any of the other epistles; and he wrote the closing book in Scripture, the Book of Revelation, which, of course, is quite different than any other book in the New Testament as well.

At the outset of Scripture, in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis, *God has revealed the structure and central subject matter of ALL subsequent Scripture*. As well, within these verses, *He has made known "the end from the beginning"* (Isa. 46:9, 10).

And, *IF* John's gospel occupied its proper place as the opening book in the New Testament, *EXACTLY the SAME type opening — providing the SAME information, though in a different form and manner (cf. Heb. 1:1, 2) — could be seen at the beginning of the New Testament (John 1:1-2:11) as previously seen at the beginning of the Old Testament (Gen. 1:1-2:3)*.

(Both Genesis and John begin *at the SAME place*, "In [the] beginning.")

Both have *the SAME* septenary structure in the opening two chapters, where *Creation, Ruin, Restoration, and Rest* are seen in each.

Moses deals with *the restoration of the ruined material creation occurring over six days time [restored in four days, with animals and man created on days five and six], with a day of rest following*.

And John deals with *the restoration of a subsequent ruined creation, ruined man, occurring over six days time [6,000 years], with a day of rest following [1,000 years]*.

And the subject matter throughout each, in keeping with the introductory septenary structure in each, is *the SAME* — Moses using *types* and John using *signs* to convey this subject matter.

For additional information on John's gospel in the preceding respect, refer to Chapter V in the author's book, *The Acts Period*.)

Thus, *it could have ONLY been natural* that God chose John to write the closing book of Scripture, which, as his gospel, has been written in a manner connected *with signs* and has to do centrally *with the Jewish people*.

Then, inseparably connected with the preceding, the Book of Revelation is actually *the sequel to John's gospel*, for this book deals with *HOW God brings to pass the purpose for the eight signs in his gospel*.

And this occurs through *Israel's repentance being effected during the fulfillment of Daniel's Seventieth Week* (Dan. 9:24-27), seen beginning in Revelation chapter six and continuing through the first part of chapter nineteen (dealt with in a summary respect in chs. 17-19a [*ref. Volume III of this book*].)

("Signified" in Rev. 1:1, revealing how this book has been transmitted and structured, is the translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of the word for "sign" [*semeion*] in John's gospel, showing the manner in which this book has been transmitted and structured as well.)

And beyond this, the Book of Revelation opens up and further reveals that which began to be opened up in John's gospel, at the beginning of the New Testament, which is the same as that which began to be opened up in Genesis, at the beginning of the Old Testament.

There is *NOTHING* in later revelation (the New Testament) that is not seen in earlier revelation (the Old Testament).

And the Book of Revelation, drawing from *ALL previous Scripture*, is simply an opening up of these Scriptures, *beginning in Genesis*. This book is about *the unveiling of Jesus Christ*, which is how the text begins.

This book is about *an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures which became flesh in the person of God's Son* (John 1:1, 2, 14; cf. Luke 24:25-27; John 5:46). In this respect, this last book in Scripture, as well, is about *the mystery of God being finished* (Rev. 10:7), which is another way of saying the same thing as *the unveiling of Jesus Christ*.

(A "mystery" in Scripture has to do with *something made known in the Old Testament but NOT fully opened up and revealed UNTIL the matter had been dealt with at a later time in the New Testament*.

And the Word, which was/is/always will be God, becoming flesh in the person of the Son, *allows both the unveiling of the Son and the finishing of the mystery of God to be viewed in a synonymous sense in this book.*)

A Synopsis

Following introductory remarks concerning Christ, the book begins at a time very near the end of Man's Day (a 6,000-year day), progressing from that point into "the Lord's Day" (the 1,000-year Messianic Era), and ending in the Day of God (in the endless cycle of ages beyond the Messianic Era).

Events seen in this book beyond the introductory remarks concerning Christ (1:1-9) begin with the removal of the Church into the heavens at the end of the present dispensation and the subsequent appearance of the Church before Christ's judgment seat (1:10-3:22).

As well, chapters two and three also present a history of the Church throughout the dispensation, beginning with

Ephesus (which *had left its “first love”*) and ending with Laodicea (which is described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” [2:4, 3:17]).

But, though a history of the Church is also shown in chapters two and three, *the EMPHASIS* in these two chapters is *NOT* on the historical aspect of the chapters. Rather, from the way matters are introduced in chapter one (vv. 10-20), *the EMPHASIS in these two chapters can ONLY be seen as judgmental, in line with that seen throughout the whole of the book.*

Chapter four begins the same way chapter one had begun beyond the introductory remarks concerning Christ — depicting, once again, the removal of the Church into the heavens (vv. 1, 2; cf. 1:10). But, though beginning with this same scene from chapter one again, *matters in chapter four immediately move to the outcome and purpose for the previous judgment of Christians (chs. 1b-3), which is REGAL.*

God, on the throne (v. 3), is the One Who appoints and removes rulers in His kingdom (Dan. 4:17, 25, 26; Matt. 20:23). And in this chapter, twenty-four crowned elders are seen relinquishing their regal positions in God’s kingdom (as they would relate to *ONE province in God’s kingdom, to the earth*), with a view to others ruling in their stead (vv. 10, 11).

Crowns are cast before God’s throne (which, at this place in the book, *could ONLY be* a relinquishment of crowns by *angels* who, in time past, ruled with Satan in his kingdom), with a view to others (Christians, having previously been shown qualified *to rule* through decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat) wearing these crowns in the coming kingdom of Christ (*ref. Ch. XV in this first volume*).

Chapter five has to do with a seven-sealed scroll — the title deed to the earth — *containing God’s requirements for the redemption of the inheritance (the territory presently in Satan’s possession and under his control, which, following redemption, will pass into Christ’s possession and be under His control).*

And the redemption of the inheritance, taking place through Christ breaking the seals of the seven-sealed scroll (6:1ff) — bringing judgments to pass of such a severe nature that no parallel exists throughout man's 6,000-year history — is the central subject of succeeding chapters, all the way into the opening part of chapter nineteen.

The harlot woman, Israel, seen in this condition numerous places in the Old Testament (e.g., Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:1ff; Hosea 2:2), is seen in the Book of Revelation at the apex of her harlotry, in and affiliated (having illicit relations) with the kingdom of Antichrist at the end of the Times of the Gentiles (Rev. 17:1-19:6).

And during this time, through the process of these judgments coming to pass, the Jewish people *will find themselves in such dire straits that they will have NO place to turn OTHER than to the God of their fathers.*

And in so turning, the nation's repentance will be effected through these judgments, with a view to Israel's harlotry being put away (Rev. 17:16; 18:8-10, 18-21; 19:1-3).

THEN, in accord with His promise, God will send the Deliverer (cf. Ex. 2:23-3:10; Lev. 26:40-42; II Chron. 7:12-14); and the Jewish people, looking upon and receiving their Deliverer, their rejected Messiah, will apply the blood of the Lamb which they slew 2,000 years ago (seven years earlier during the time in which they will find themselves, in Daniel's heretofore unfulfilled seventieth week [Dan. 9:24-27; Zech. 12:10-14; 13:6]).

Israel's Deliverer will return with His angels (II Thess. 1:7), sending them out worldwide to regather a converted Jewish people from the nations of the earth, where they either were or will be scattered (Matt. 24:30, 31). And the Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead at this time in order that those who died out of the land can return back to the land with the living (Ex. 12:41; 13:19; Dan. 12:1, 2).

The Jewish people will then be dealt with in a place called "the wilderness of the people" (Ezek. 20:34ff).

A new covenant will be made with the house of Israel at this time (Jer. 31:31-33); *and the nation will be placed back in their own land, NEVER to be uprooted again* (Ezek. 36:24-38; 37:21-28; 39:25-29).

After Israel's repentance, conversion, and restoration, the Times of the Gentiles, following 2,600 years of Gentile control and dominance, will end. Gentile world power will be destroyed, the theocracy will be restored to Israel, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, and the long-awaited Messianic Era will be ushered in (Rev. 19b-20a).

Then, events from the middle of chapter twenty to the end of the book deal with that which will be brought to pass following the Millennium, leading into the unending cycle of ages which follow.

Satan, at the close of Christ's millennial reign, will be loosed from the abyss, go out to deceive an innumerable multitude from the nations of the earth, and lead those whom he will have deceived against the King in Jerusalem and against His people, the Jewish people. Those coming against Christ and the Jewish people in that day will be destroyed by fire from heaven, with Satan and his angels then being cast into the lake of fire where he will reside throughout the subsequent endless ages (20:7-10).

The present heavens and earth will pass out of existence (20:11; cf. II Peter 3:11, 13), be completely destroyed, and the Great White Throne Judgment will follow (20:12-15).

The unsaved dead from throughout time dating all the way back to man's creation will be judged. And these individuals, following judgment, will be cast into the same lake of fire that Satan and his angels had previously been cast, where they will reside throughout the same endless ages of eternity.

Beyond this, a new heavens and new earth will be brought into existence, and a glimpse into things associated with the new heavens and new earth are then given (chs. 21, 22).

Christ, with His co-heirs, will reign *over the earth* from His Own throne during the Millennium. And this throne will be located *in the new Jerusalem ABOVE the present earth*, evidently in the same location from whence Satan and his angels rule the earth today (Rev. 3:21; cf. Job 16:15; Eph. 6:10-18).

But during the ages beyond the Millennium, Christ will be seated on a throne with His Father, *in the new Jerusalem ON the new earth*, referred to in Rev. 22:1, 3 as “the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

And from this throne, *God will continue His rule over the whole of His kingdom, extending throughout the multiplied billions of provinces scattered throughout the multiplied billions of galaxies comprising the physical universe.*

Christ will sit on this throne with His Father; and from this throne, redeemed man will exercise regal power, which could only extend out into the universe.

This is what lies in store for redeemed man throughout the unending cycle of ages following the Millennium, comprising eternity.

A Paradox

Paradoxically though, it is mainly unredeemed man, not redeemed man, who is interested in and talks about going out into the heavens today. Man, in NASA's Apollo missions, has been to the moon and back nine times ('68-'72). But man's dream is to go far beyond, out to the planets.

Redeemed man is interested in and does talk about going to heaven, but that's not the same thing at all. And when *the Millennium or the eternal ages* are in view, it's not even Biblical to talk about going to heaven in a manner of this nature.

The Biblical picture has to do with redeemed man exercising *REGALITY in relation to this earth, followed by REGALITY in relation to the universe itself.*

Man's creation, his fall, and the purpose surrounding his salvation *ALL center around REGALITY*. And *THIS REGALITY* will be realized in *Christ's kingdom over the present earth during the Millennium and from the new earth out into the heavens in the whole of the universe during the eternal ages which follow*.

Thus, though unredeemed man may talk about going out into the heavens, *he's NOT going*. Redeemed man, who seems to know very little about it today, *is the one destined to go out into the heavens*.

But man moving out into the heavens in this manner will occur *ONLY following the Millennium*. The next event in God's ordered program is *Christ's rule over the earth for 1,000 years*.

And THAT is where redeemed man should focus his attention during the present dispensation, for this is the direction toward which the whole of Scripture moves. This though should not be done with an exclusion to that which lies in the ages beyond, for note how John concludes the Book of Revelation and Scripture as a whole, with two chapters dealing with this future time.

The entire program of God has, from the beginning, been moving toward the coming *Sabbath of rest*, having to do with *the seventh day* in Gen. 2:2, 3 and John 2:1. The great prophecies of Scripture speak of *THIS day*, the judgment seat of Christ precedes and has to do with *THIS day*, and Christians during the present dispensation are exhorted to fix their attention upon *THIS day*.

THIS day, THAT coming day, has to do with *things related to the PRESENT heavens and earth*. And to focus one's attention on things beyond *THIS day*, on things related to the new heavens and new earth, is to ignore the central teaching of Scripture, beginning with the Book of Genesis and ending with the Book of Revelation.

A trained runner fixes his attention upon the GOAL; and a trained Christian, in the present race of the faith, will likewise fix his attention upon the GOAL.

1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (I) Subject and Manner Revealed

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:1-3).

The title of this book, “The Time of the End,” is an expression taken from Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9, referring in Daniel specifically *to a future time* which the Jewish people will pass through at the end of Man’s Day, immediately before and at the time when “the Sun of righteousness” arises “with healing in his wings” (*cf.* Dan. 12:1-13; Mal. 4:1, 2).

This time is shown in the Book of Daniel to encompass events during *the last seven years of Man’s Day* (the final seven years in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy) and events at the time of Christ’s return, which lead into *the Messianic Era*, “*the Lord’s Day*” (*cf.* Dan. 2:40-45; 7:7-14, 23-28; 8:9-14, 23-25; 9:24-27; 11:21-45).

The Book of Revelation, paralleling the Book of Daniel in this respect, deals centrally *with events during this same future time*, ending, as well, in the Messianic Era, in “the Lord’s Day.”

The Book of Revelation though deals *NOT ONLY* with Israel (covering the same time and a number of the same events seen in parts of the Book of Daniel [occurring during “the time of the end”]) *BUT* also includes God’s end-time dealings with the Church as well.

In this respect, matters pertaining to the Church are introduced and dealt with *first* in the Book of Revelation (chs. 1-4). And in the chronological sequence through which events in the book move, *God deals with the Church first for a revealed reason:*

The bride MUST be removed from the body (which will occur following decisions and determinations at the judgment seat) *prior to events surrounding two things (set forth in chs. 5-19):*

- 1) *The redemption of the inheritance.*
- 2) *The bride becoming Christ’s wife.*

These two events will occur *simultaneously* through God’s judgment upon the earth-dwellers (Israel and the nations, following the removal of the Church) during and at the conclusion of the final seven years of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy (chs. 6-19).

And the bride MUST be present PRIOR to the redemption of the inheritance, else there CANNOT be a bride to become Christ’s wife at the conclusion of the redemption of the inheritance.

Thus, events surrounding the judgment seat, with the bride subsequently revealed, *MUST occur PRECEDING the Tribulation, PRECEDING the redemption of the inheritance.*

(All of this will be worked out in later material in this book. Refer particularly to Chapters I-III in Volume II.

The redemption of the inheritance, as it has to do with the Church, is foreshadowed by Boaz’ redemption of the inheritance, as it had to do with Ruth.

Refer to the author’s book, Ruth, Chapters VIII-X.

As well, note something about not only the Book of Ruth but another O.T. book as well, the Book of Esther. Both books are about a woman, which they were named after; and no one knows who wrote either book.

The Book of Ruth has to do with events occurring over three millenniums ago, and the Book of Esther has to do with events occurring over two and one-half millenniums ago.

Ruth presents a complete history of the Church and ends with that brought to pass through the redemption of the inheritance, as it has to do with the Church; and Esther presents a complete history of Israel and ends with that brought to pass following the same redemption of the inheritance, but as it has to do with Israel.

Thus, these two books together form commentary material on the first twenty chapters of the Book of Revelation. Consequently, the books are filled with information about that found in these twenty chapters of the closing book of Scripture. And these books, along with Daniel, are only three of the numerous Old Testament books of a similar nature.

And with the preceding in mind, note something and note it well:

Within the confines of the Word, God has ALREADY provided ALL of the necessary commentary material on His Word. THIS word is to be understood BY comparing Scripture with Scripture, NOT BY going to different commentaries written by man.

And THIS Word is to THEN be proclaimed, NOT that emanating from man.)

Then, moving beyond the redemption of the inheritance and related matters, before closing the Book of Revelation, John was given a glimpse into events and conditions during the endless cycle of ages beyond the Messianic Era (chs. 21, 22).

Scripture has very little to say about that which occurred prior to Man's Day, and it has very little to say about that

which will occur following the Messianic Era. But Scripture does reveal enough about events which occurred preceding Man's Day and events which will occur following the Messianic Era to allow man to piece the whole of the matter together.

God has revealed the necessary information which will allow man to know and understand why he was created in God's image, after His likeness, at a particular time in history.

And, through this revelation, man can know and understand why the fall occurred and why God provided redemption following the fall (which, as the reason for man's creation, centers around *regality* — *having to do with the government of the earth* — *to be realized during the seventh day, the seventh millennium, the Messianic Era*).

And man can also know and understand that God has far-reaching plans for the individual created in His image, after His likeness. Man's destiny beyond the Messianic Era, clearly revealed at the end of the Book of Revelation, *is to have a part in the government of the universe itself*.

(For information on the government of the earth and the universe, past, present, and future — which includes angels and man — refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth*.)

An Opening Up, a Revealing

The word "Revelation" (v. 1) is a translation of the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which means to "disclose," "reveal," "uncover." And this word, along with its verb form (*apokalupto*), are together used forty-five times in the New Testament in passages such as Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13.

The Book of Revelation, the *Apokalupsis*, the "Apocalypse," is about *a disclosure, an uncovering, an unveiling* of that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son (*cf.* John 3:34, 35; 5:20-22; 7:16; 8:28). And

that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son is seen in both Old and New Testament Scriptures as “all things” (cf. Gen. 24:36; 25:5; John 16:15; Col. 1:16-18; Heb. 1:2-13).

Then, more directly, and in the words of the book itself, that being made known pertains to *a revelation of the Son Himself*.

This book is an opening up of that which relates ALL that the Father has given to and would accomplish through His Son, revealed through a revelation of the Son Himself.

And the revelation of the Son, according to this opening verse, is going to be accomplished through a specific, revealed means — through revealing “things which must shortly [Gk., *tachos*, ‘quickly,’ ‘speedily’] come to pass.”

That is to say, once this revelation of the Son begins through an unfolding of future events, the revelation will occur in a quick or speedy fashion — actually over time covering little more than seven years.

(On the translation of *tachos* in the opening verse as “quickly” or “speedily,” refer to a cognate word, *tachu*, used seven times in this book, translated “quickly” each time [2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20].)

According to John 1:1, 14, the incarnation was simply the Word (the Old Testament Scriptures) becoming flesh. There is *the written Word* (which is living [Heb. 4:12]), and there is *the living Word* (which is the written Word, inseparably connected with the Father, made flesh [cf. II Cor. 3:6-18]).

The Book of Revelation is thus an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures *through a Person, through the Word which became flesh*. And the thought of an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures extending to and including an opening up of the New Testament Scriptures as well would be completely out of place, for there is *NOTHING* in the

New that cannot be found, after some fashion, in the Old. If there were, *there could NOT be the necessary corresponding completeness between the written Word and the living Word at a time before the New Testament even began to be penned.*

The New Testament, *at any point, of necessity, can ONLY* have to do with revelation which can be seen as having an Old Testament base. Revelation in the New Testament *MUST* bear the same inseparable connection with the Word made flesh as revelation in the Old Testament bears.

Thus, the existence of the Word made flesh *preceding* the existence of the New Testament clearly relates the truth of the matter concerning the content of the New Testament. *The New can ONLY be an opening up and revealing of that previously seen in the Old.* To state or think otherwise is to connect the Word made flesh with one Testament and disconnect Him from the other — *an impossibility.*

In short, *the Old Testament is complete in and of itself; the Word made flesh incorporates this same completeness, and the New Testament adds NOTHING per se to this completeness.*

Any supposed subsequent addition *would be impossible, for this would be adding to that which God had already deemed complete through the incarnation, the Word made flesh.*

The preceding is why Christ, shortly after His resurrection, began at “Moses and all the prophets” (an expression covering the whole of the O.T.) when He appeared to and began *making Himself known* to two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31).

The living Word, using the written Word, began putting together different facets *of a word picture pertaining to Himself.* And He could have gone to *any part of the Old Testament* to accomplish the matter, for *the whole of the Old Testament* was about Him.

Through this means, those being addressed would be able to see one (the word picture) alongside the other (the

Word made flesh). And, comparing the two, they would be able to come into an understanding of *NOT ONLY the identity of the One in their midst BUT an understanding of that which had occurred in Jerusalem during the past several days as well.*

This is the manner in which God has put matters together in His Word, making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to man. And this is why the Son — God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh — undertook matters after *EXACTLY* the same fashion when making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection.

Then the same thing is seen when He appeared to ten of the eleven remaining disciples (with Thomas absent) in Jerusalem a short time later (Luke 24:36-45; John 20:19-29).

And this is the manner in which the Book of Revelation *MUST* be studied. Since it is an unveiling of the living Word, it is equally an unveiling of the inseparable Old Testament Scriptures.

Thus, there is really *ONLY one way* that a person can come into a proper and correct understanding of the various things opened up and revealed in this book, which, of course, would be equally true of any other portion of Scripture.

(For a more comprehensive study of the preceding, refer to Chapter IV "The Word Made Flesh," in the author's book, *Signs in John's Gospel*.)

1) *Sent and Signified...*

The word "signified" is a translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of *semeion*, meaning "sign."

The Apostle John introduced, opened up, and developed matters in his gospel account *through signs*. And in the Book of Revelation, matters are introduced, opened up, and developed *in a similar manner*.

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types, numbers, signs, and metaphors* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known. And this *MUST* be recognized, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history. Or if *numbers, signs, or metaphors* are used — which they often are — he will fail to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured *in a particular manner*, closely related to the manner that John was led by the Spirit to structure his gospel.

The Gospel of John was built around eight signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry, and these signs were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (which occurred between 33 AD and about 62 AD).

And the Book of Revelation — dealing largely with the Jewish people once again (*exclusively*, along with God's dealings with the nations through Israel, in chs. 6-19 [save 19:7-10], covering time and events during and immediately following Daniel's Seventieth Week) — uses the verb form of the word for "sign" at the very outset *in order to reveal the manner in which this book has been structured*.

To understand how the word *semaino*, translated "signified," is used introducing the Book of Revelation, note how John uses this same word three times in his gospel, in John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19. The context leading into each verse provides an illustrative statement which allows that stated in the verse to be understood.

Note the first of these three usages, within context:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying [from *semaino*] what death he should die” (vv. 32, 33).

Aside from Rev. 1:1 and the three verses in John’s gospel, the only other usages of the word *semaino* in the New Testament are in Acts 11:28; 25:27. And the same thought is set forth through the use of the word in these two passages, though the illustrative statement is inferred in the first usage.

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino*, has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader *FROM a somewhat indirect means TO a direct means, using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter.*

And this is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation centrally through the use of numerous *numbers* and *metaphors*, though *other illustrative means* are used as well. And all illustrative means of this nature in the book are, they would have to be, in line with the meaning of the word *semaino* and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

2) Through His Angel unto His Servant John

God’s use of angels and angelic ministry comprises another major facet of the Book of Revelation, forming another key to coming into a proper understanding of the book. God uses angels in all facets of His activities as He governs a universe from a place which Scripture locates by direction and through the use of a superlative — “the uttermost parts of the north” (Isa. 14:13, ASV).

This place is located at a northern-most point, north of the earth. And this place in relation to the earth would be located more specifically north of Jerusalem; and more specifically yet, this place would be located north of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; and even more specifically yet, this place would be located north of the brazen altar in the courtyard of the Temple located on the Temple Mount.

The brazen altar is where the sacrifices took place — “on the side of the altar northward before the Lord.” And sacrifices occurring at this brazen altar occupied center-stage in Scripture in *EXACTLY* the same respect that Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary occupies center-stage in Scripture, for the former foreshadows the latter, with God requiring *death and shed blood* throughout (Lev. 1:11; cf. Job 26:7; Ps. 75:6, 7; Heb. 9:22).

(Note in this respect that the place Christ was crucified, outside the city [John 19:20; Heb. 13:12], would have had to be located *directly north of the place where the brazen altar once stood* — two unknown locations today [though the approximate, but *NOT* exact, location of the brazen altar on the Temple Mount could be known].

Regardless of claims, *NO one* can go to Bethlehem or Jerusalem today and be directed to the exact places where Christ was born, died, or was buried and raised from the dead.

There are traditional sites. But matters *CANNOT* move beyond tradition, and the reason for that would be evident.

First, man *DOESN’T* need to go to these sites. The written Word, which provides all of the God-designed word pictures about the living Word, is complete and sufficient in and of itself,

And, *second*, if man could go to and be assured that he was at one of these three locations, he would undoubtedly *do EXACTLY* the same thing (and possibly more) that he has already done with the traditional sites, detracting from that which God deems important, that which is complete and sufficient in and of itself.)

All angels in God's universal kingdom either rule provinces in the kingdom (*e.g.*, the earth is one such province) or have some other type connection with the rulership of the different provinces.

That is to say, all activity of angels within the kingdom of God would have to be activity somehow connected with God's universal rule within this kingdom.

In this respect, all angels would have some part in this rule, whether directly or indirectly.

Some angels would *rule as heads of state* (ruling over provinces, as Satan presently rules over the earth).

Other angels would *rule under these angels* (as angels presently rule under Satan).

Others would hold *positions as watchers and holy ones* (as seen in Dan. 4); others would occupy *positions surrounding God's throne* (as seen in Rev. 4, 5, 7).

And others would comprise *the armies of heaven* (as seen in the camp of Israel in the Old Testament, or as seen among those who will accompany Christ when He returns to the earth [*cf.* II Kings 6:17; Matt. 24:31; II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14]).

Though God appeared in Moses' presence and acted directly, God used angels when giving the Law (Acts 7:53; *cf.* Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

And something very similar occurred when John "was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9b). The Son acted directly in the revelation of Himself to John, as the Father had previously acted directly in that made known to Moses at Sinai (*cf.* Ex. 19:3ff; Rev. 1:10ff).

But, though direct intervention occurred by both the Father and the Son at these different times, angelic ministry was also involved. And in both instances a kingdom was in view — the Old Testament theocracy, and the theocracy yet to exist.

Blessed Is He...

The Book of Revelation is the only book in Scripture containing a specific statement at the beginning of the book relative to blessings awaiting *the one hearing, reading, and keeping the things stated in the book* (v. 3).

However, though this is the only book which opens with a statement of this nature, *the same thing would have to be true of any portion of Scripture.*

Such a thought *could NOT* be confined to just the Book of Revelation *but would have to be true concerning Scripture as a whole*, for the whole of Scripture presents one complete word picture, through numerous, individual word pictures, of all facets of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

And one part *CANNOT* be placed above another part in this respect. The Book of Revelation simply *CANNOT* be separated in this manner from the whole of Scripture, *for this book is about the whole of Scripture* (cf. Ps. 12:6; 138:2; II Tim. 3:15-17).

The Book of Revelation brings all previous revelation together *in an apex*, with the “mystery of God” being brought *to a completed state* in this book (Rev. 10:7). And that would possibly account for this statement *being found in the Book of Revelation alone, though not really restricted in application to this book alone.*

(Numerous things in the New Testament are referred to through the use of the word “mystery.”

For example, there is:

The “mystery” of the kingdom [Mark 4:11; ‘mysteries’ in Matt. 13:11; Luke 8:10].

The “mystery” of Israel’s blindness [Rom. 11:25].

The “mystery” of the rapture of the Church [I Cor. 15:51].

The “mystery” revealed to Paul [Eph. 3:3].

The “mystery” of Christ [Eph. 3:4].

The “mystery” of Christ and the Church [Eph. 5:32].

The “mystery” of God [Col. 2:2; Rev. 10:7].

The “mystery” of iniquity [II Thess. 2:7].

The “mystery” of the faith [I Tim. 3:9].

The “mystery” of godliness [I Tim. 3:16].

The “mystery” of the woman and the beast [Rev. 17:7].

The word “mystery” is a translation [more of an Anglicized form] of the Greek word *musterion*. The word, as it is used in Scripture, has to do with that which *CANNOT* be explained by man, requiring an opening up through Divine means. The word has to do with something revealed in the Old Testament, which is later more fully opened up and developed in the New Testament.

Apart from Divine revelation in the Old Testament, man *COULDN'T* know about the mystery in the first place; then, apart from Divine revelation in the New Testament, the mystery *would NOT* be opened up and further revealed.

In the preceding respect, a mystery, contrary to common teaching and thought in certain circles, *CANNOT be something completely new*, separate from and unknown in the Old Testament. The fallacy behind that type reasoning has previously been discussed in this chapter. There *CANNOT be anything in the New that is NOT in the Old*, else, as previously stated, the Word made flesh before the New was penned would have to be separated, at least in part, from the New — an impossibility.)

“The mystery of God” in Rev. 10:7 — *the revelation of God*, which began with Gen. 1:1 — has, at this point in the book, been opened up and fully revealed through *a revelation of the Son* (Rev. 1:1ff; cf. Col. 2:2, ASV, “...the mystery of God, even Christ”).

And the completion of God's revelation surrounding this mystery can occur at this mid-point in the book for the same reason that "the kingdom of the world" can become that "of our Lord, and of his Christ" in Rev. 11:15 (ASV), at this mid-point in the book as well.

In both instances (Rev. 10:7; 11:15) the seventh trumpet has sounded, signaling a *completion of ALL God's judgments upon the earth-dwellers*. And a completion of these judgments can be seen at this point in the book (depicted by both verses) because the seven trumpets form *ALL the judgments of the seventh seal of the seven-sealed scroll seen in chapters five, six, eight, and nine*.

And, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:1-11), that which God will have required for the redemption of the inheritance — the earth, over which Christ and His co-heirs are about to rule — *will have been completed*.

As well, the seven vials of wrath (15:1-16:17) form another picture of the seven trumpet judgments, providing further commentary on these terminal judgments. *Thus, they, as the seven trumpets, form ALL the judgments of the seventh seal*.

The judgments during and immediately following the Tribulation are often looked upon in a trifold manner—seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials of wrath. *However, ALL judgments are brought to pass through the breaking of the seven seals ALONE*.

Since the seven trumpets form the judgments of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1, 2), and the seven vials form another depiction of the same judgments, *the WHOLE of God's judgments in chapters six through eighteen are encompassed within the breaking of the seven seals of the scroll ALONE*.

Thus, the search in chapter five is ONLY for One worthy to take the scroll which God held in His right hand and open the seals of this scroll.

(The structure of the Book of Revelation in the preceding respect [*e.g.*, how the end can be seen in the middle of the book, in chs. 10, 11b], along with the relationship of the trumpet and vial judgments to one another, is dealt with at length throughout the different chapters forming the remaining three volumes of this book, chapters which deal with the seven-sealed scroll and the breaking of the seals on the scroll].)

It is within a book where everything is brought to an apex — where Old Testament Scripture concerning God, Israel, and Gentile world power during the Times of the Gentiles is opened up and fully revealed — that the Spirit, through John, began the book through calling attention to *the blessings reserved for those reading, hearing, and keeping those things contained in the book.*

The thought of *reading* and *hearing* would need no clarification, but the thought of *keeping* would. *HOW*, for example, is a person to *KEEP* parts of the book relating to judgment, etc.?

The word translated “keep,” *tereo* in the Greek text, does normally mean “to keep.” However, as in any language, context will often determine and govern different ways that a word is used and is to be understood. And such would be the case with *tereo* in Rev. 1:3.

The word, for example, is used in Matt. 23:3; 28:20 more in the sense of “observe,” as translated in the KJV and NASB. And the word, contextually, is used in a similar sense in Rev. 1:3 — “observe” or “give heed” (*ref.* NASB). In this apex of revelation, where Old Testament Scripture is opened up and revealed, blessings have been promised for those who *read, hear, and observe or give heed* to the things being made known to and recorded by John.

And the text goes on to provide a reason, stating, “for the time is at hand.”

“At hand” is the same expression used in Matt. 3:2; 4:17 when John and Jesus announced the kingdom of the heavens being “at hand.” *The Messianic King was present in Israel’s midst, with an offer of the kingdom, contingent on the nation’s repentance.* Thus, the announcement of the kingdom could be made in this manner.

And something very similar is seen in Rev. 1:3. *The full revelation of the Son, from the Old Testament Scriptures, is about to occur. God will complete His dealing with both Israel and the Church during Man’s Day, bringing these dealings to a full end; and this will be for purposes having to do with the Messianic Era.*

THEN, God’s Son — with Israel and the Church occupying their proper positions in the kingdom — will take the sceptre and reign.

Thus, the same expression, “at hand,” as seen when Christ was on earth the first time, with the kingdom in the offing at this time, *could ONLY aptly describe the circumstances, conditions, and time seen in this closing book in Scripture.*

2

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (II)

The Oneness and Eternality of the Father, the Son

“John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne:

And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:4-8).

The opening three verses of the Book of Revelation relate both *the SUBJECT matter* of the book and *the MEANS* which God used to convey His Word as the Spirit of God moved John to pen the things which he had both seen and heard.

The announced *SUBJECT matter* of the book is an unveiling, a revealing of Jesus Christ. It is an opening up and a making known the Old Testament Scriptures through the Word which became flesh, through God's Son (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45).

And making the Old Testament Scriptures KNOWN in this manner was accomplished through a particular, revealed means, shown by the Greek word *semaino*, translated “signified” (ref. Chapter I in this volume of the book).

Further, the MEANS of conveying the written Word through the living Word in this manner was accomplished through angelic ministry, with John being removed from Man’s Day and placed, at a future time, in “the Lord’s Day.”

And at this future time in “the Lord’s Day,” John was allowed to see and hear that which the Spirit moved him to record.

The next five verses (vv. 4-8) then carry the reader through a description of God’s Son, as God would have man see and understand specific things about His Son.

And this would be with a view to that about to subsequently be made known through an opening up and unveiling of the living Word.

The whole of the matter surrounding God’s description of His Son throughout these verses centers around REGALITY. And, reflecting back on the Old Testament, from which material in the Book of Revelation is drawn, the WHOLE of the Old Testament moves TOWARD a future day which is being revealed through God’s Son in this book.

The ONE Whose RIGHT it is to rule is ABOUT to take the sceptre and reign over the earth, as seen in the second Psalm, the one hundred tenth Psalm, and numerous other Old Testament passages. And it is these passages — the written Word, the Old Testament Scriptures — which are being OPENED up and REVEALED THROUGH the living Word in the Book of Revelation.

The One Who Is, Who Was, and Who Is to Come

The words “which is, and which was,” referring to God the Father in Rev. 1:4, are used in this same sense in four other verses in this book (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5).

The words “and is to come” can be found in the first two references, the presence of these words is open to question in the third reference (some Greek manuscripts have the words, some don’t), but the words are not found in the Greek text of the fourth reference. A word referring to *holiness* is used in the fourth reference instead — “the One existing, and the One Who was, the Holy [or ‘righteous’] One.”

The same things are said about *BOTH the Father and the Son* through the statement appearing in verse four and then repeated in verse eight. The first reference (v. 4) has to do with *the Father*, and the second reference (v. 8) has to do with *the Son*.

Thus, *BOTH the Father and His Son* are seen as the One “which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

The first two expressions (“which is,” and “which was”) are *timeless*. Both are translations of the same Greek word (*eimi*), a verb of “being” (the word which Christ used of Himself in John 18:5-8 [“I am,” NOT “I am He”]), which would exclude any thought of a beginning or an ending.

In the Greek text, the first word (translated, “which is”) is a present participle, and the second (translated, “which was”) is a verb in the imperfect tense. Both together show *continuous, timeless action existing throughout all of the past, into the present, without any thought of ending*.

Thus, as seen in these two verses (vv. 4, 8), *BOTH the Father and the Son exist in a co-equal respect throughout ALL time, apart from ANY reference to a beginning or an ending. And the coming of the Father (v. 4) occurs through a coming in the person of His Son (v. 8).*

According to John 1:1, 14a:

“In the beginning was [*eimi*] the Word, and the Word was [*eimi*] with God, and the Word was [*eimi*] God...

And the Word was made [‘became,’ *ginomai*] flesh...”

Eimi, the same verb used in the Greek text of Rev. 1:4, 8 is used in an imperfect tense three times in John 1:1 (same tense as used in Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). “God” and “the Word” are seen as *ONE and the SAME; and, again, continuous existence, apart from ANY reference to a beginning or an ending, is seen during past time through the use of this imperfect tense.*

Also, there is no definite article before “beginning” in the Greek text of this verse, *for God, His Son, and His Word have NO beginning, as they have NO ending.*

Then, in the first part of verse fourteen, *the Word* from verse one, which was identified as *God* and seen to have existed throughout all past time, apart from a beginning, “was made [‘became’] flesh, and dwelt among us...”

The verb used in this verse (“was”), though translated the same as *eimi* in verse one, is from an entirely different word in the Greek text — *ginomai*. And *ginomai* in verse fourteen, unlike *eimi* in verse one, *is not used in the same timeless sense.*

Ginomai calls attention to a definite beginning point, which occurred at the time of the incarnation (which is shown by an aorist tense in the Greek text [rather than an imperfect tense as seen with *eimi* in v. 1], with the aorist tense calling attention *to a past action which has been attained, completed*). The Word, inseparably identified with both the Old Testament Scriptures and with God, *became flesh at a point in time in the person of the Son.*

The incarnation is nothing more and nothing less than *God becoming “flesh” in the person of His Son* (cf. John 10:30; 14:9).

And, in turn, the incarnation is nothing more and nothing less than *the Old Testament Scriptures (which are inseparably identified with God and are, in their entirety, about His Son) being set forth in a manner OTHER than written form.*

The incarnation has to do with the written Word, being revealed through "flesh," in the person of the Man Christ Jesus.

In the preceding respect, as seen in John chapter one, *the Father, the Son, and the Word are inseparable.*

Yet the Word is in man's possession on earth today, with both the Father and Son in heaven. And in heaven, the Son is seated on the right hand of His Father (Ps. 110:1; Rev. 3:21).

Explain the matter? Impossible!

Finite, fallen man, relative to the discussion at hand, *CANNOT go beyond simply reading and believing that which Scripture reveals.*

Man is *NOT* called upon to explain an inseparable, yet separable, Father, the living Word, and the written Word. Rather, he is called upon to BELIEVE that which God has stated about the matter.

Thus, as seen in the text and in corresponding Scripture, the Book of Revelation, being an opening up and an unveiling of God's Son, *is simply an opening up and unveiling of the Old Testament Scriptures in the form of "flesh"* (II Cor. 3:6-18).

And, as well, this book *is an opening up and unveiling of God, Who is "spirit"* (John 4:24 [NOT "a Spirit," as in the KJV, *BUT* simply "spirit," i.e., "God is spirit"; ref. NASB, NIV, Weymouth, Wuest]).

(The inclusion of an indefinite article in John 4:24 in the English translation completely changes the meaning of the verse and does away with the anarthrous use of the word seen in the Greek text.

The Greek text, unlike English, does not contain indefinite articles, only definite. And *there are reasons why* the definite article is either used or not used before words.

The article calls attention to and emphasizes *identity*; and when the article is not used, *character* or *essence* is emphasized instead.

For example, I John 4:8b states, “God is love.” There is no article before love, and *character* and/or *essence* are centrally in view. *God, as to His character, His essence, His being, is love.*

And the same thing is in view through the use of the anarthrous word, “spirit,” in John 4:24. *God, as to His essence, His being, is spirit.*

Note what the inclusion of an indefinite article in the translation of John 4:24 does to the meaning of the text.

Reading “God is a Spirit” not only completely does away with the correct meaning of the verse but it moves the thought *into the physical realm* [where it doesn’t belong at all], leaving the reader with a completely erroneous view of God.)

Understanding that the Book of Revelation is a revealing, an unveiling of the Son, the inseparable connection between *God, the Son, and the Word* can, as well, be seen in the statement in Rev. 10:7:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished [brought to an end, completed, fully opened up and revealed], as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (*cf. Amos 3:7*).

“A mystery” in the New Testament has to do with *Old Testament revelation further opened up and revealed in the New*. And since the Book of Revelation is about an opening up and revealing of the Old Testament through the One Who became “flesh,” inseparably identified with God, the things surrounding God would, as well, be opened up and revealed at the same time, through this same means.

Things about God in the Old Testament, not fully opened up and revealed in the Old Testament (referred to as *a mystery* in Rev. 10:7), *are seen fully opened up and revealed in the person of the Son in the Book of Revelation.*

THAT'S what the book is declared to be about!

The book is simply an opening up and a revealing of those things from the Old Testament Scriptures which yet remain a mystery, yet remain to be opened up and revealed about God and His Son.

And THIS is accomplished by means of God, through His Son, opening up and revealing Himself, as seen in this book.

(The mystery of God will have been fully opened up and revealed *WHEN the seventh trumpet has sounded*, occurring at a mid-point in the book [8:1-10:7; 11:15-19; 15:5-16:21].

At the conclusion of the trumpet and vial judgments [different descriptions of the same judgments], *ALL of the judgments set forth through the breaking of the seven seals of the scroll will have occurred.*

Thus, when the seventh trumpet has sounded and the corresponding seventh vial has been poured out, *the WHOLE of God's judgments upon the earth-dwellers, along with a FULL revelation of Himself, can be seen as having occurred.*

This is why Rev. 11:15, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet [and the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial], states:

"The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever" [ASV].

Note that events in the Book of Revelation have been given in a chronological order, *BUT* in what might be called "a repetitious chronological order."

This order, in turn, can be divided into four parts [seen in the way that the four volumes of this book present matters], with a chronology of events shown in each part [also in different parts of each part]. And these chronologies of events quite often overlap and help explain previous chronologies of events.

ALL of this will be developed different places in the four volumes of this book. Thus, the matter will not be further dealt with at this time.)

The Ruler of the Kings of the Earth

The description of Christ in Rev. 1:5, 6 *is that of a King with His co-heirs. Israel and the nations* are brought into the picture immediately following (v. 7). Then there is the picture of *His eternity, with no beginning or ending* (v. 8). And throughout these four verses (vv. 5-8), *the coming intervention of this individual into the affairs of man can once again be seen.*

Things are *NOT* going to go on and on, uninterrupted, in man's affairs as they occur during Man's Day. God works with *set times* (known only to Him) in connection with *circumstances* (usually brought about by man's failures).

In history, God has always stepped into man's affairs when the time and circumstances were right. And He will do the same thing again yet future.

The current Middle East situation, for example, is *NOT ONLY about to tumble completely out of control BUT it will tumble completely out of control.* God will allow this to occur *for a revealed purpose.*

And, because the problem is of a spiritual nature which man has NO control over, man CAN'T do anything about the inevitable.

The whole of the matter lies in God's hands, under *His sovereign, providential control of all things.* And when the time and circumstances are right — when God's purpose for allowing conditions in the Middle East to become so completely out of control that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" — God will once again step into the affairs of man and straighten the whole of the matter out.

That's really what the Book of Revelation is about.

It is about “the time of the end,” when God once again steps into man’s affairs — a time NOT ONLY dealt with extensively by the Old Testament prophets BUT a time which the world is rapidly approaching.

And the book has to do with more than God just stepping in once again. The book details a final intervention in order to bring 6,000 years of redemptive work to a close and usher in the Messianic Era.

(For additional information on the Middle East situation, as it exists today, refer to the author’s book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*)

1) *Seven Spirits, Faithful Witness*

“The seven spirits” before God’s throne (Rev. 1:4) are seen in connection with “the faithful witness” of the Son (v. 5). *These seven spirits* are referred to in Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6, and *the faithful witness* of the Son can be seen in Rev. 1:2, 9; 3:14; 22:20 (cf. John 18:37).

There is an inseparable connection between the two. “Seven” is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view*. *The unveiling of the Son*, “which God gave unto him,” is in view (Rev. 1:1). And *the seven spirits* emanating from God’s throne, in connection with *the faithful witness* of the Son (contextually, the unveiling seen in this book), would show the manner in which all things surrounding the introductory statement in verse one is brought to pass.

The Father, through His Son, brings the whole of that which is in view to completion.

And parts of verses four and five form additional commentary on verse one, providing the reader with more of an understanding of the means which God used to bring to pass that about to be opened up and revealed in this book.

2) *First Begotten, Prince*

The words “first begotten” are a translation of the compound Greek word *prototokos*. This word is made up of *protos*, meaning “first” and *tikto*, meaning “to beget,” “to bring forth.” This is the word used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) in Ex. 4:22, which states, “Thus saith the Lord God, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.”

The word is used relative to Christ in Rev. 1:5 in exactly the same sense that it is used relative to Israel in Ex. 4:22. In both instances *God’s firstborn Sons* are in view; and in both instances, *death, burial, resurrection*, and ultimately *regality*, are inseparably in view as well.

Note how all of this is set forth in the Exodus account under Moses.

God’s firstborn son, Israel, through a vicarious death, is seen as *dead* in Exodus chapter twelve (both *national Israel* and *individual Israelites* are seen in this respect, for a lamb dies “for an house [both for the house of Israel and individuals within families in the nation]”; cf. Ex. 4:22; 11:4, 5; 12:1ff).

Then there is a subsequent *burial* in the Red Sea and a *rising up* out of the place of death on the eastern banks of the Sea, removed from both Egypt and the Sea (chs. 14, 15).

And all of this is with a view to *one GOAL* — *realizing an inheritance in another land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein*.

Then note *HOW ALL of THIS* is seen in the experiences of man today, Jew and Gentile alike during the present dispensation.

The Lamb has died, His blood has been shed. And this blood must be appropriated and properly applied, which is by faith today.

Beyond this is the Red Sea passage, the waters of baptism, with a burial of *the old man*, followed by *the new man ALONE* rising up out of the waters. And having come up out of the

waters, out of the place of death, the Christian is *THEN* to “walk in newness of life,” setting his mind on “those things which are above...not on things on the earth [*EXACTLY* as the Israelites under Moses were *NOT* to look back to Egypt *BUT out ahead*]” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1, 2).

And the *END* or *GOAL* of the matter for Christians under Christ is *EXACTLY* the same as it was for the Israelites under Moses — realizing an inheritance in another land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein.

This is the manner in which Christ is presented in Rev. 1:5, when seen as “the first begotten [‘firstborn’] of the dead.”

And because Christ occupies this position, when “the manifestation of the sons of God” occurs, when God brings “many sons unto glory,” God’s Son will *THEN* occupy the position of “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:19, 29; Heb. 2:10).

Note Col. 3:3, 4 in this respect. The third verse has to do with Christians during present time, and the fourth verse has to do with Christians during future time (*cf.* John 12:23-25):

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye
also appear with him in glory.”

Christ being referred to as “the first begotten of the dead” in Rev. 1:5 is in connection with Christ also, immediately following, being referred to as “the prince of the kings of the earth.”

The word translated “prince” in verse five is *archon* in the Greek text, referring to a “ruler.” And this is in connection with the whole of the matter — *the immediate context, the book as a whole, and related Scripture.*

3) *Loved Us, Loosed Us*

Based on manuscript evidence and contextual usage, “loosed,” rather than “washed,” would appear to be the preferred translation in Rev. 1:5.

In the Greek text, the word for “loose” is *luo*, and the word for “wash” is *louo*. There is not only a close spelling of these two words but a similar-sense etymological use as well.

Some manuscripts have *luo*, and some have *louo*. A letter has either been dropped or added to the word. And, considering the context, *which is regal* (a king sets individuals free by issuing a royal decree), evidently the latter has occurred (a letter added), making the KJV text incorrectly read “washed” instead of “loosed.”

The whole of the matter begins *with redemption*, a “loosing” from sin, which is with a view to ultimately bringing fallen man back into the position where he can realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning — “...let them have dominion [‘let them rule’]” (Gen. 1:26-28).

And God’s love surrounding the matter *is seen in God’s character. God, as to His essence, His being, is “love”* (I John 4:8).

This is why John 3:16 begins, “For God so loved...” As seen in this verse and elsewhere, God *will NOT* manifest Himself apart from His revealed character.

(Note something often misunderstood relative to God revealing Himself through *love* — God’s harsh treatment of individuals and nations during and at the end of the coming Tribulation, along with His treatment of the unsaved following the Millennium.

On the former, God’s love for His son, Israel, *is so great* that He has decreed that *blessings or curses* are contingent on man’s treatment of His son [e.g., Matt. 25:31-46].

On the latter, God’s love for His Son, Jesus, *is so great* that He has decreed *that man’s eternal destiny will rest on man’s acceptance or rejection of His Son.* [e.g., John 3:18; Rev. 20:11-15].)

God's redemptive work relative to man, emanating from His love, began in Eden following man's sin. God slew one or more animals, took the skin(s), and clothed Adam and Eve. *Death and shed blood* occurred, which set an unchangeable pattern for God's continued redemptive work.

The matter is seen in a two-fold sense in the story of the Israelites under Moses in the type in Exodus.

FIRST, a redemptive work resulted in the death of the firstborn in Egypt; *THEN, a continuing redemptive work* (for a people already redeemed) subsequently occurred through Aaron's high priestly ministry after the Israelites had been removed from Egypt.

And BOTH were based on death and shed blood and were with a view to that which lay out ahead — an inheritance as God's firstborn son, to be realized in another land.

The matter, as well, is seen in a two-fold sense with respect to Christians under Christ in the antitype today.

FIRST, a redemptive work has resulted in the death of the firstborn in the world (*EXACTLY* as it occurred in connection with the death of the firstborn in Egypt over 3,500 years ago).

THEN, a continuing redemptive work subsequently occurs through Christ's present high priestly ministry for Christians, who are in the world but not of the world (*EXACTLY* as seen through Aaron's ministry in the camp of Israel [John 15:19; 17:14-16; cf. John 18:36]).

And, EXACTLY as in the type, BOTH are based on death and shed blood and are with a view to that which lies out ahead — an inheritance as God's firstborn son, to be realized in another land.

4) Made Us a Kingdom, Priests

The expression, "kings and priests," in Rev. 1:6; 5:10 could be better translated, "a kingdom, priests."

The expression is similar to and in keeping with the one in I Peter 2:9, “a royal [‘kingly’] priesthood [referring to a *body of priests in a kingdom*].”

And the Septuagint translators used the identical wording seen in I Peter 2:9 (relative to Christians) in God’s description of Israel in Ex. 19:6 — “a kingdom of priests.”

The picture is that of *one kingdom with a body of priests*, whether in a past or future theocracy, and whether relative to Israel or Christians.

In the past theocracy, “God,” in the nation’s midst, was *the King*. “Israel,” because of God’s presence as King, formed *a kingdom*; and the Israelites in the kingdom were looked upon *as priests*, with the nations to be ruled by and blessed through Israel, “a kingdom of priests.”

This is the position which Israel will occupy yet future when the nation has been restored to their land and the theocracy has been restored, with Christians occupying *EXACTLY the same position from a heavenly sphere under Christ*.

And Christians can occupy such a position *ONLY* because, “in Christ,” they are “Abraham’s seed [*the ONLY seed through which ALL spiritual blessings flow*], and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29).

3

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (III)

Order of Events When Christ Returns

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7).

That part of the *apokalupsis* dealt with in the Book of Revelation — an unveiling of Jesus Christ, seen through an unfolding of events — has to do with end-time events occurring immediately preceding, at the time of, and following the Son’s return to the earth. And verse seven of the eight introductory verses brings this facet of the book into full focus.

That encompassed in verse seven has to do with more than just Christ’s return immediately following the Tribulation. This verse also covers events immediately preceding the Tribulation, having to do with His return as well.

And the whole of the matter surrounding Christ’s return is to be looked upon *as one coming or one return, NOT two comings or two returns as is often taught.*

That is to say, *Christ’s coming, His return*, encompasses *NOT ONLY* events surrounding the removal of the Church preceding the Tribulation *BUT ALSO* events surrounding Israel and the nations following the Tribulation. This is simply the way in which the matter is dealt with in Scripture, which can be clearly seen in the Book of Revelation.

Immediately after the statement in verse seven, connecting the unveiling from verse one with *Christ's return*, is a statement having to do *NOT ONLY* with the Son's eternality and Deity *BUT ALSO* with the Son's return from the previous verse (*cf.* vv. 4, 8).

Christ's return, with attendant events, then immediately begins to be developed in the book (1:9-4:11), with much of the remainder of the book given over to events anticipating the completion of His return at the end of the Tribulation (chs. 5-20a).

(Individuals failing to understand *the singular sense* of Christ's return as presented in Scripture are sometimes led into a false teaching pertaining to the timing of the removal of the Church.

Some erroneously teach that Christ's removal of the Church before the Tribulation and His dealings with Israel and the nations following the Tribulation *form two returns*.

Others correctly see that Scripture deals with Christ's return *in a singular sense*, but they often erroneously see this return occurring only at the end of the Tribulation. And viewing matters after this fashion, they sometimes seek to bring the removal of the Church into this singular sense of Christ's return by moving the timing of this removal to the end of the Tribulation, where it doesn't belong at all.

Thus, one error has fostered another, which is often the case when error in Biblical interpretation begins to surface.)

Behold, He Cometh with Clouds

When Christ returns, whether at the time of the removal of Christians preceding the Tribulation or at the time when He deals with Israel and the nations following the Tribulation, He will be accompanied *by angels*.

God is seen using angels in *ALL facets of His activity throughout Scripture.*

God is seen *acting directly in ALL matters; but such actions, far more often than not, are brought to pass through angelic activity.*

God has instituted established laws, and angels act under these established laws. And, with angels acting under these established laws, their actions become God's actions.

There are a number of classic examples in Scripture, but two will suffice — the destruction of the cities of the plain in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen and the giving of the Law through Moses, beginning in Exodus chapter twenty.

In the destruction of the cities of the plain, in Gen. 19:13, two angels revealed that they would destroy these cities, for the Lord had sent them to destroy the cities (referring to Sodom alone in the passage, though four cities were destroyed [Deut. 29:23]).

Then in Gen. 19:24 it is recorded that *the Lord* destroyed these cities. And it is a simple matter to understand *EXACTLY* what occurred if one understands how God uses angels in all facets of His activities.

The two angels, acting under Divinely established laws, destroyed the cities. And their actions, because of the manner in which they were performed, were viewed as the Lord's actions as well.

The giving of the Law occurred in the same manner.

Though God gave the Law in a direct manner — “written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18) — it was, as well, given “by the disposition [‘direction’] of angels” (Acts 7:53; cf. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

EXACTLY the same type interchange between God and angels will occur at the time of Christ's return. Though Christ *will be directly involved* with Christians, Israel, and the nations at this time, *angelic activity is seen throughout.*

The voice of an archangel will be heard at the time of Christ's shout surrounding the resurrection and removal of Christians from the earth. And multiplied thousands, possibly millions, of angels will accompany Christ, *NOT ONLY at this time BUT in connection with judgment to follow — a judgment dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation* (cf. Matt. 16:27; II Thess. 1:7; Jude 14, 15).

Then, in connection with that facet of Christ's return when He deals with Israel and the nations, again innumerable angels will accompany Him (Rev. 19:14; cf. Deut. 33:2; II Kings 6:17; 19:35).

It is specifically stated that the God of Israel, *following Israel's repentance, will personally "return ['turn about'] and gather thee [the Jewish people] from all the nations"* where He had scattered them (Deut. 30:1-3; Ezek. 34:13; 36:24ff; 37:12-14; 39:25ff).

BUT, it is also specifically stated that God will accomplish this task through angelic activity in connection with His Son's return (Matt. 24:29-31).

(For additional information in this realm, refer to Appendix. I in this first volume of the book, "Actions Under Established Laws.")

The preceding should shed light on something extensively seen throughout most of the Book of Revelation.

This book deals *far more extensively* with angelic activity in connection with God's activity than any other book in Scripture. Though such activity exists throughout these other books and, at times, is mentioned or dealt with, the Book of Revelation stands *ALONE* in fully opening up and revealing this activity for all to see.

And this would be in complete keeping with the fact that this book completes *the full revelation, from the Old Testament, of NOT ONLY the Son BUT the Father as well* (Rev. 1:1; 10:7).

The Son seen returning “with clouds” in Rev. 1:7 *may very well be a dual metaphorical reference to both “Deity” and “angels.”*

“Clouds” are sometimes used in Scripture in connection with Deity (e.g., Ex. 13:21, 22; 14:19, 24; 19:9; Ps. 104:3; Isa. 14:14; 19:1; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 17:5; 26:64; Acts 1:9; I Cor. 10:1, 2). And the reference to “clouds” could very well include *the myriads of angels* (i.e., clouds of angels, connected with Deity, with their actions being the Lord’s actions).

The former (Deity) is undoubtedly referenced through the use of the word “clouds,” and the latter (a possible reference to accompanying angels) may be included as well. But to contend for the latter as also being referenced is unnecessary, for other Scriptures provide this type information.

(It is often taught and, consequently, believed by many that Christians will return back to the earth with Christ at the end of the Tribulation.

The basis for this type teaching is taken mainly from a statement in Rev. 19:14 [cf. I Thess. 4:17]:

“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

Some expositors seek to limit this reference to Christians alone, and others seek to see a reference to not only Christians but to angels as well. The matter, either way it is viewed in the preceding respect, presents a twofold problem:

1. Any time those returning with Christ are identified, they *are always identified as angels*, sometimes referred to as “holy ones” [Heb., *kodesh*; Gk., *hagios*; cf. Deut. 33:2; Matt. 16:27; Jude 14]. The translators of the Septuagint [Greek version of the O.T.] rendered the word *kodesh* in Deut. 33:2 as *aggeloi* [angels] rather than a plural form of *hagios*, “holy ones.” Thus, they provided commentary rather than a translation of the word, knowing that the use of “holy ones” was a reference *to angels* in this text.

2. Biblical typology would show the fallacy of the teaching that Christians [still Christ's bride at this time, about to become His wife] will return to the earth with Christ.

For example, when Joseph dealt with his brethren, his wife was in another part of the palace. And Moses' wife only went part way with him when he returned to Egypt to deal with His brethren [Gen. 45:1ff; Ex. 4:20-31; 18:2].

[As developed later in this book (Volume II, Chapters I, II), Christ's bride, having previously been revealed through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat (Rev. 1b-3), *will NOT become His wife UNTIL the completion of ALL the judgments revealed by the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Rev. 5.*

And these judgments will NOT be completed UNTIL Christ returns and overthrows Gentile world power (seen in Rev. 11:15-19; 14:14-20; 16:16-21; 19:11-21), with the marriage of Christ and His bride being part and parcel with the completion of these judgments].

As in Biblical typology, Christ's bride [about to become His wife] *will NOT* be with Him when He returns to the earth to deal with His brethren in the antitype of that seen in the accounts of Joseph and Moses.

Moses' wife returning part way with him may show Christ's bride also returning part way with Him, but remaining in the New Jerusalem above the earth while Christ, accompanied by angels, returns on to the earth to deal with Israel and the nations.

Aside from the preceding, Christ's bride in that day *would NOT* be described as "the armies which were in heaven," as seen in Rev. 19:14. This is a description used of *angels*, *NOT of a bride or wife* [II Kings 6:17; Joel 2:11].)

1) Every Eye Shall See Him

Christians will see Christ following the removal of the Church, preceding the Tribulation; and those surviving

the judgments of the Tribulation, among the nations of the earth, will see Him at the completion of His return following the Tribulation.

Sometimes the words “every” or “all” are used in Scripture in a sense which is not necessarily all-inclusive.

For example, Matt. 3:5, 6 states that “Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan” not only went out to hear John but “were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” But in the very next verse (v. 7), that stated about the Pharisees and Sadducees clearly excludes them from what would appear to be an all-inclusive statement in the previous two verses. Thus, it is evident from the context how the word “all” is being used.

Something similar is seen through that stated about the signs being manifested in Israel’s presence in Matt. 4:23-25. “All” is used several times in these verses, and, again, it is evident from the context that the word is not used in an all-inclusive sense. Rather, *the word is used in a more exclusive sense*, having to do with activity where Christ was ministering or where word concerning His ministry had spread, not necessarily as a reference to every single part of the region or to every sick person in that region.

And the same could only be true concerning Christ’s return, with “every eye” seeing Him. People seek to envision how this will occur, seeing it perhaps occurring via TV or other similar means. But all the speculation is unnecessary. “Every eye” may not necessarily *see Christ at this time, particularly at the exact time of His return, at the end of the Tribulation*. He will return to a point in the Middle East (to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem), and individuals at that time will be residing at various places worldwide.

Activity will be centered in the Middle East, and those there will see Him in a very personal manner, particularly those present when He treads the winepress (Isa. 63:1-6).

The Gentile nations coming against Israel and Israel's Messiah in that day will be brought into complete disarray, followed by the complete and utter destruction of Gentile world power (Ps. 2:1-5; Ezek. 38:18-23; 39:1-8, 21-23; Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:8-14; Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff).

If the reference in Rev. 1:7 is thought of in the sense of "every eye" seeing Christ *at the exact time of His return*, the matter should undoubtedly be thought of in more of a relative rather than absolute sense. But, if "every eye" seeing Christ is thought of in a larger context, over ensuing time, then the matter could be understood in an absolute or all-inclusive sense.

Christians throughout the present dispensation (both those raised from the dead and those removed without dying) will, individually, stand before Christ as He sits upon His judgment seat, *with every Christian seeing Him*.

THEN, after numerous individuals in the Middle East have personally seen Christ, He will reign for 1,000 years, both on and over the earth. And *every individual* living during that time will be able to personally see the One Who, at long last, will have brought peace to a troubled world.

And THEN, all of the unsaved dead will one day see Him at the Great White Throne judgment following the Messianic Era.

Thus, IF the statement is not to be understood as all-inclusive surrounding events at and following the time of Christ's return, it can ONLY be understood as all-inclusive if viewed in a broader respect.

2) They Also Which Pierced Him

THEN, Israel is specifically singled out from among the nations of the earth, from among those on the earth who will see Him in that day. And Jews still alive, having survived the Tribulation (*cf. Matt. 24:13*), who do not see Him at the exact time of His return, *WILL see Him at later points in time.*

Something often overlooked in connection with Israel and the nations seeing Christ at the time of His return is the fact that *Israel will be regathered from a worldwide dispersion BEFORE Gentile world power is destroyed.*

To set the stage for the preceding, in the middle of the Tribulation the Jews in the land of Israel, forming the present nation of Israel, are going to be uprooted and driven out among the Gentile nations once again. An Israeli nation, as it exists in the Middle East today, *will NOT exist during the last half of the Tribulation* (Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; cf. Joel 3:1-8; Rev. 11:2).

Israel's future removal from the land and dispersal among the nations once again *MUST occur, for God has decreed that He will deal with His disobedient son, His adulterous wife, OUT among the nations, NOT in the land. Thus, their being uprooted from the land HAS to occur* (cf. Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff; ref. Jonah cast into and then dealt with in the sea).

Once all of the Jewish people have been dispersed out among the Gentile nations again, occupying, in a complete and full respect, the position depicted by *the harlot* in Revelation chapter seventeen through the first six verses in chapter nineteen (17:1, 15, 16; 19:2), God *will THEN* deal with the nation in such a manner that *Israel's harlotry will ultimately be done away with* (17:16; 18:8-10, 21; 19:2, 3).

And to accomplish this, God will use Gentile persecution *of such an extreme nature* that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved"; but "for the elect's sake [for Israel's sake, *for whom this type Gentile activity will exist in that day*], those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:22).

(For a detailed discussion of *the harlot* in Rev. 17-19a in the preceding respect, refer to the author's book, *Mystery of the Woman*.)

Israel, through Gentile persecution of this nature, will be brought to the place where the nation will repent. Then God, in accord with His promise (II Chron. 7:14-22; *cf.* Ex. 2:23-3:12; Lev. 26:40-42), will send the Deliverer, Who *will NOT ONLY* remove His people from the nations *BUT* will then destroy Gentile world power.

3) *Ezekiel Thirty-Three through Forty-Eight*

Ezekiel chapters thirty-three through forty-eight present a somewhat complete picture of the whole of the matter — from the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles during the days of Nebuchadnezzar to that future time when the Messianic Kingdom will have been established.

The material throughout chapters thirty-three through thirty-nine presents different facets of Israel's past disobedience and Israel's future deliverance. Then chapters forty through forty-eight present different things pertaining to Israel during the Messianic Era.

The timing of events depicted in chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine is often misunderstood, mainly because of a misunderstanding of the nature of the existing Israeli nation in the Middle East today (often incorrectly understood as God having regathered his people in accord with the prophecies seen in the preceding chapters of Ezekiel [chs. 33-37]).

In short, there is *NOTHING* in these chapters (chs. 33-39) that has to do with the existence of the present Israeli nation in the Middle East or with the return of millions of Jews from the Gentile nations of the earth in post-WWII days, comprising this present Israeli nation.

The regathering in these chapters in Ezekiel's prophecy *has to do, NOT with any type past or present return of the Jews, BUT with a FUTURE removal of the Jewish people from the nations, AFTER Israel's repentance and AFTER God has sent His Deliverer back to THIS repentant nation.*

(The only relationship between *the existence of an Israeli nation in the Middle East* and *end-time events* is the fact that a nation [of a nature which presently exists] *MUST exist* in that part of the world for events during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week to be fulfilled.

But, to associate the present return of a remnant under a Zionistic movement with God's promise to one day restore His people to their land is a mistake in Biblical interpretation of major proportions, resulting from *a complete misunderstanding of the purpose for the Times of the Gentiles as it relates to Israel* [ref. the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*.]

The setting for events in Ezekiel chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine, both textually and contextually, has to do with *a repentant and converted nation back in the land following Messiah's return, NOT with an unrepentant and unconverted remnant in the land today, preceding Messiah's return.*

The timing of events in these chapters *CAN ONLY be AFTER Messiah's return, AFTER Israel has been regathered from the nations, and at the TIME of the destruction of Gentile world power* — something repeatedly seen, *NOT ONLY* in these chapters *BUT* in previous chapters leading into these two chapters (cf. 38:8, 14-16; 39:4-8, 21-29).

Then the natural flow of events is on into chapters forty through forty-eight, depicting Israel in the Messianic Era following their regathering (ch. 37) and the destruction of Gentile world power (chs. 38, 39).

The SOLE reason for the Times of the Gentiles, wherein the Gentile nations hold the sceptre, *is Israeli disobedience.*

NOT ONLY is the existence of Gentile world power the result of Israeli disobedience *BUT* the matter has been designed to effect *Israel's repentance, in order that Israel's calling relative to the nations might ultimately be realized.*

And this is something NOT being realized after any fashion through the remnant presently in the land.

In fact, with the sceptre still in the hands of the Gentile nations, the existence of a remnant in the land today (a remnant which has returned under a man-orchestrated Zionist movement, apart from their Messiah, before it is time for the nation to return) is *ONLY making matters worse (actually, MUCH, MUCH worse)* in an already troubled world.

(For more information on the preceding, along with the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*, refer to "The Intractable Middle East Problem," Appendix II, in this first volume of the book.)

Once Israel's repentance has been effected, *there will NO LONGER be a NEED for Gentile world power.*

In fact, Gentile power of a nature which exists today, or during the Tribulation, *will have to be COMPLETELY destroyed, done away with*, for, during the Messianic Era Israel is to hold the sceptre, with the nations being both subservient to and blessed through Israel.

And this, of course, *CANNOT occur* as long as the Gentiles hold the sceptre, as they have done for over 2,600 years, since the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

All upon the Earth Shall Wail

When Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, He will return to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, to a land *which will THEN* be inhabited and controlled by the Gentiles, *NOT* to a land inhabited and controlled by the Jews.

BUT, He will not immediately overthrow Gentile world power. Instead, His actions will be directed first and foremost toward His brethren, the Jewish people.

Christ's return to His people will occur in EXACT accord with Moses' return to his people in the type.

Note that *Moses returned to his people in Ex. 4, BUT the overthrow of Gentile world power did NOT occur UNTIL Ex. 14, AFTER numerous things had occurred.*

Accordingly, *numerous things MUST occur between the time Christ returns and Gentile world power is overthrown.*

There is a seventy-five-day period spoken of at the end of the Book of Daniel (12:9-13); and, from the way that this period is dealt with in Daniel, it is evident that these seventy-five days have to do *with the time between the end of the Tribulation to the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom.*

Thus, this period has to do with that time in the type extending from Moses' return to deal with the Jewish people in Ex. 4 to a time beyond the destruction of Gentile world power in Ex. 14, to the time of the establishment of the kingdom in Ex. 40 (also, in a larger respect, looking beyond Ex. 40 to Joshua).

All of this, along with corresponding Scripture, will be developed different places in the four volumes of this book.

Then, ending this third chapter in Volume I, note a few brief remarks concerning what the future holds for both the Jews and the Gentiles.

1) The Jews

The Jewish people, in that coming day, when they see their Messiah at the time of His return and realize what the nation did at the time of Messiah's first appearance (rejected and crucified their Messiah), are going to be troubled beyond a degree which words can really express.

They are going to be as Joseph's brethren at the time Joseph revealed himself to them (Gen. 45:1-3), or as Paul when Christ revealed Himself to him as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6).

Or, note Zechariah's description of Israel's reaction to Christ's presence among them in that day (Zech. 12:10-12).

Matters will then continue *EXACTLY as seen in the types.*

As Joseph brought his brethren into a state where they went forth proclaiming, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:26), Christ is going to bring His brethren into a state where they will go forth proclaiming, "Jesus is yet alive, and He is governor over the entire earth."

Or, as seen in Paul's conversion and his carrying this message throughout the Gentile world of that day, Israel will do *EXACTLY* the same thing in that coming day.

2) *The Gentiles*

But before Israel goes forth with this message, Gentile world power will, of necessity, *HAVE to be destroyed.*

And the Gentile nations, *having held the sceptre for over 2,600 years, are NOT going down without a fight* (with Satan as the power behind these actions, *as he rules and controls the nations* [Dan. 10:10-21], *having held the sceptre since time immemorial* [Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:12-15]).

And, under Satanic leadership, as Gentile armies move toward Jerusalem, their actions will be directed against God's firstborn Sons, Christ and Israel.

But the battle will be completely one-sided. That which will occur in that day is revealed in a succinct manner in Rev. 19:17-21, though dealt with in more detail numerous places throughout the Old Testament (*e.g.*, Ps. 2:1-6; Isa. 63:1-4; Ezek. 38, 39; Dan. 2:44, 45; Joel 3:9-17).

And though the Gentile nations will have no knowledge of the fact at that time, *ALL of this will occur, NOT to their detriment, BUT for their ultimate good.*

Major CHANGES will be necessary, allowing ALL things to be aligned with God's designed plan for mankind.

ONLY THEN can blessings flow forth THROUGH Israel OUT to the nations of the earth.

4

In the Lord's Day (I)

Removed FROM Man's Day, Placed IN the Lord's Day

"I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man..." (Rev. 1:9-13a).

John was on the Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea (a northern branch of the Mediterranean Sea lying between Greece and Turkey), for a specifically stated purpose: "for ['because of'] the Word of God, and for ['because of'] the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 9; cf. v. 2).

John was the one whom God had chosen to receive and record "the revelation ['the unveiling'] of Jesus Christ" (v. 1), further described in verses two and nine as "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ."

And John had been taken to the Isle of Patmos *for THIS specific purpose*.

The Isle of Patmos was about ten miles long and six miles wide, and there was a penal colony on this island in John's day.

The existence of this penal colony has given rise to a widely-held teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled on this island by a Roman ruler because of his proclamation of the Word of God (usually understood as Domitian [who ruled from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D.]; and this Roman ruler is cited because of the widely accepted late date for the writing of the Book of Revelation).

The beginning of this teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to the Isle of Patmos can be traced back to at least the latter part of the second century, extending into the third century, a century or more after the Book of Revelation had been written.

This was taught by several of the early Church fathers during this time (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all taught this). And this same teaching has been passed down, taught through the centuries, into modern times.

The teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island in the Aegean Sea though *has NO basis in fact*. It is strictly *tradition*, and this teaching undoubtedly arose and has continued to be accepted down through the centuries because of a misunderstanding of the stated purpose for John being on this island, given in verse nine of the opening chapter.

It is specifically stated that he was on this island *for ONE purpose*: "...for ["because of"] the Word of God, and for ["because of"] the testimony of Jesus Christ" (1:9b).

John, being on this island *because of the Word*, takes one back to the things previously stated concerning the content of the book, in verses one and two.

John was on the Isle of Patmos *for a purpose which he himself provides*, as the Spirit moved him to write.

He was there “because of” *the revelation (the unveiling) of Jesus Christ* (the manner in which the book opens, introducing the subject matter of the book), which is declared to be “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 2; cf. John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:10b, 13).

John was on this isle *to receive and record that which God was about to bring to pass*. He was there *to receive and record God bringing to completion ALL that He desires man to know and understand concerning His Son* — “the revelation [‘the unveiling’] of Jesus Christ.”

God seems to have an affinity for taking individuals whom He has chosen to isolated, out-of-the-way places to receive His revelation.

Moses wrote the Pentateuch while in the desert; David wrote a number of Psalms while out in the hills, being pursued by Saul; Ezekiel wrote from a place of exile, from Babylon; and Paul was taken to a place in Arabia, then into heaven, to receive the revelation of the mystery, while later writing several epistles from prisons.

Thus, *it should NOT be thought strange at all* to see God removing John from surroundings which the outside world offered and taking him to the remote Isle of Patmos to receive the capstone for all Scripture. In fact, *something of this nature should be thought of far more as expected rather than strange*.

But why this particular island?

The answer is probably in its location. The Isle of Patmos, along with being a place removed from the outside world, was located out in a part of the Mediterranean Sea, with the “sea” being used in Scripture to depict *the Gentile nations*.

The Book of Revelation is, first of all, *about the Church, as it presently exists among the nations and as it will exist once the Church has been removed from the nations* (chs. 1-4, 19a, 20a).

Then, the book continues *with Israel out among the nations and that which will occur once Israel's repentance has been brought to pass* (chs. 5-20a).

Thus, to see John removed from his surroundings and taken to an isolated place out in the sea, for a particular purpose, *can only be seen as simply one of the ways that a triune God carries out matters of this nature.*

I Became in Spirit

Verse ten should literally read, "I became in spirit in the Lord's day..." And John was *NOT ONLY removed in this manner from the Isle of Patmos into heaven BUT he was ALSO moved FORWARD in time as well. John was moved forward to a time at the END of the present dispensation.*

(John's removal from the Isle of Patmos into heaven is simply stated to have been "in spirit." Then, chapter four [vv. 1, 2], depicting the same scene again, adds information.

And whether this was an actual bodily removal or a removal by means of visions, as in Dan. 7:1, 2; 8:1, 2; 10:1, is unrevealed and immaterial to the literality of and teachings drawn from the subject matter at hand.

Then, note that which John was about to be shown, detailing that which God wants man to know about events and conditions from the beginning of this time to the beginning of the Messianic Era.

The first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation, preceding the Millennium in chapter twenty, can be divided into two major parts, *with chapter five forming a conclusion to the first part and an introduction to the second part.*

Chapter five has to do with a seven-sealed scroll, held by God in His right hand, and the search for an individual worthy to take the scroll and break the seals.

And this scroll *contains God's terms for the redemption of the inheritance* — "the heavens and the earth" from Gen. 1:1,

because of Gen. 3:17-19 — and the things seen in this chapter have just as much to do with that which has preceded in the first part of the book [chs. 1-4] as they do with that which then follows in the second part of the book [chs. 6-19].

The natural flow of events through the first four chapters has to do with the Church, ending in chapter five.

Then, Israel and the nations occupy the center of attention, with the natural flow of events beginning in chapter five and continuing through chapter nineteen.

But for purposes of this four-volume commentary set, since the seals of the scroll in chapter five begin to be broken in chapter six, commentary on chapter five can be found at the beginning of Volume II, dealing with chapters six through ten. And the dual nature of events in chapter five, as seen in the preceding, will be dealt with at that time.

The IMPORTANCE of properly understanding events in chapter five, as they relate to BOTH that which precedes and that which follows, CANNOT be overemphasized.)

John, as clearly stated in verse ten, and as clearly seen in continuing verses, was removed from “Man’s Day” on earth and placed in “the Lord’s Day” in heaven.

Once John had been removed from the Isle of Patmos into heaven, *he was FIRST shown things which would occur relative to the Church* [judgment, with a view to the ensuing Messianic Era] (chs. 1b-3).

And he was THEN shown corresponding things relative to the transfer of the government of the earth FROM angelic rulership TO man's rulership (ch. 4; cf. Heb. 2:5).

THEN, he was shown things pertaining to the seven sealed scroll, containing God's terms for the redemption of the inheritance, which had to do with BOTH heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom, about to exist under Christ and His co-heirs on the one hand and under Christ and Israel on the other (ch. 5).

John was THEN progressively moved farther forward in time, into and through seven subsequent years (Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the Tribulation). And he was shown things which would transpire on earth relative to Israel and the nations during and immediately following these seven years (chs. 6-19).

And during this time, *NOT ONLY* would "the inheritance" be redeemed *through judgment*, *BUT* "the bride" previously shown forth at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-4) *would become the Son's wife*, allowing the Son to be in a position to reign (*cf.* Gen. 2:18).

(According to the manner in which God established matters in the beginning relative to man holding the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels, a sovereign *MUST* possess a consort queen [Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24]. The man and woman *MUST reign together, seated on the throne as ONE complete being.*

God's Son today *is NOT* in a position to assume the sceptre and reign. He *MUST* have a wife to ascend the throne with Him, a wife which, in the antitype of Eve in Gen. 2, *is NOT ONLY part of His body BUT will complete Him* [*cf.* Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23, 30; Heb. 2:10].

And the Son *will NOT* possess a wife in the manner seen in the type *UNTIL* the end of the coming Tribulation [*cf.* Ruth 3, 4].

A knowledge of this fact will address, resolve, and put to rest widely-held false teachings concerning a present existence of some type mystery form of the kingdom in which the Son is presently reigning; or, others become more specific and see the Son already seated on David's throne within this purported mystery form of the kingdom.

The preceding may sound strange to those properly instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom [*cf.* Matt. 13:52]. And so it should. Strange though or not, different aspects of the preceding are widely held in Christian circles today, even taught in many Bible colleges and seminaries.

But one Biblical fact concerning *the necessity* of the man and the woman ascending the throne *together will, ALONE, show the fallacy of such teachings. Again, Christ does NOT presently have a wife to ascend the throne with Him.*

Aside from the preceding, though there are two anointed Kings in relation to the earth today [Christ and Satan], as there were two anointed kings in Israel during the days of David and Saul, *ONLY One can hold the sceptre at any given time.*

In the type, Saul held the sceptre *UNTIL* he was put down, *with his crown THEN TAKEN and given to David. ONLY THEN did David and his faithful men take the sceptre and reign in Israel* [cf. I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:4-10; 5:3].

And matters *can ONLY be EXACTLY the same in the antitype.* Satan will hold the sceptre *UNTIL he is put down, with his crown THEN taken and given to Christ. ONLY THEN will Christ and His faithful co-heirs take the sceptre and reign over the earth.)*

THEN, beyond events of the Tribulation, John was moved even farther forward in time. He was moved through events immediately following the Tribulation, extending into the Messianic Era itself (ch. 20a).

After that, revelation continues with John being shown events which would occur at the end of the Messianic Era relative to Satan, his angels, and his followers among men on earth, along with the judgment of the unsaved dead (ch. 20b).

And that which John was shown didn't stop with events at the end of the Messianic Era. Rather, John was moved even farther forward in time and shown things having to do with the endless cycle of ages beyond the Messianic Era, when man will hold the sceptre relative to a rule extending beyond this earth, out into the universe itself (chs. 21, 22).

And a person being moved into another time and place and being shown events occurring during this future time, in this place, *is NOT* something new in Scripture.

Ezekiel, in Babylonian captivity, was moved *NOT ONLY* to another location (to Jerusalem) *BUT BOTH* back in time and forward in time. Ezekiel, through visions, was removed from Babylon, placed in Jerusalem, and shown things which had occurred both before the captivity and which were yet to occur (Ezek. 8-11).

The captivity took place in stages, beginning about 605 B.C., but the Glory did not depart until almost twenty years later, about 586 B.C.

Ezekiel had been among the early captives transported to Babylon, and it was around the middle of this period (about 595 B.C.) when the Spirit entered into Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2) and began showing him things (2:3ff), through lifting him “up between the earth and the heaven” and carrying him “in the visions of God to Jerusalem” (8:3).

Ezekiel, *at FIRST*, was moved *back in time*, allowing him to see the abominations existing among the Jewish people which had resulted in the captivity. *THEN*, he was moved *forward in time*, allowing him to see the whole of that which would follow — *captivity, desolation, BUT followed by eventual restoration* (chs. 8-11).

“Time,” rather than being a constant, is *relative*. *NOT ONLY* is this revealed in Scripture *BUT* man has been allowed to discover and see this in his secular science.

This is part of the theory of relativity which Albert Einstein (a Jew) was allowed to discover and demonstrate through showing a small part of that which God had previously established through His unchangeable laws in physics and mathematics.

And, if God so chooses (which He has done at times), He can take a man, place him in another location, and move him either back in time or forward in time from that location.

Man, through his own power, CAN'T operate in this sphere; but the One Who designed and created all of this CAN.

Then, within the scope of God doing this, *one thing* which guarantees the future occurrence of that seen throughout the Book of Revelation is the fact that, in one respect, *ALL of that seen in this book has ALREADY occurred.*

And changes CAN'T take place in that which has ALREADY occurred.

“The Lord's Day,” “The Day of the Lord” The Church, Israel, the Nations

As previously seen, John was removed from the Isle of Patmos and *was transported into “the Lord's Day” at a time beyond his own day.*

John was removed from “Man's Day” on earth and transported into “the Lord's Day” in heaven (or, “*the day of the Lord,*” as it is referred to numerous other places in Scripture). And this is seen occurring at the end of the present dispensation, at a time preceding the Tribulation.

In relation to the present heavens and earth, “Man's Day” will last for 6,000 years — extending from the creation of man to the end of the Tribulation.

THEN, when “Man's Day” has been brought to a close, “the Lord's Day” will begin.

BUT this has to do with “Man's Day” and “the Lord's Day” *in relation to the present earth and its associated heavens* (evidently, our solar system [ref. Gen. 1:1ff]).

The manner in which “the Lord's Day” is used in Rev.1:10 *has to do with the heavens where God dwells, NOT with “Man's Day” and the present heavens and earth.*

(Any thought that the expression, “the Lord's day,” in Rev. 1:10 is referencing a time other than “*the day of the Lord*” is really *NOT* open for discussion. Such a thought would be completely out of line with both the context and related Scripture.

The widely-held teaching that “the Lord’s Day” in this verse is a reference to *the first day of the week, to Sunday*, finds *NO support anywhere in Scripture. The first day of the week is NEVER referred to as “the Lord’s Day” in Scripture [unless this verse is the exception, which, contextually, it CANNOT be].*

As will be shown [ref. parenthetical section, pp. 58b-59a], this section of the Book of Revelation parallels I Thess. 4:13-5:4, where the expression, “the day of the Lord,” is used.

In this same respect, also note Ps. 118:24:

“This is *the day* which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

This verse is often quoted out of context and applied to *a day* during the present time, during “Man’s Day.”

This verse though is set within a Messianic passage and has to do with the future Messianic Era when “the Lord’s Day” will replace “Man’s Day” on earth.

And any application to present time would have to involve a secondary application of the verse.)

1) *Old Testament, New Testament*

Properly understanding Rev. 1:10ff *necessitates an understanding of foundational material from the Old Testament, understanding HOW “the Lord’s Day,” “the day of the Lord,” in Rev. 1:10 is introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament.*

Scripture MUST be compared with Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself. Otherwise, a person will end up attempting to deal with this verse in his own wisdom and naturalistic understanding.

“The day of the Lord” is an expression dealt with numerous times and ways in the Prophets, extending from Isaiah, the first of the Prophets, to Malachi, the last of the Prophets.

Preceding the Prophets, *the TIME and EVENTS therein* are dealt with numerous times and ways as well, but not referenced as or called “the day of the Lord.”

This time is seen and referred to throughout the Old Testament, *beginning with Moses and continuing with Joshua and beyond* (in the types, in the Psalms). *BUT*, to see the time and events therein referenced in connection with the expression, “the day of the Lord,” *a person has to go to the Prophets.*

Moses, looking forward, MUST be understood in line with the Prophets; and the New Testament, looking back, MUST, as well, be understood in line with the Prophets.

And with the Prophets providing the foundational information for the way that “the day of the Lord” *MUST be understood, THAT’S where a person MUST go* in order to properly understand *WHAT is meant by this expression.*

This expression, “the day of the Lord,” appears twenty-six times throughout the Prophets, beginning with Isa. 2:12 and ending with Mal.4:5 (e.g., refer to the extensive use of this expression in Joel and Zephaniah).

However, though the expression appears only twenty-six times in the Prophets, references to this expression — “in that day,” “a day of,” etc. — appear time and again, several hundred times (e.g., Isa. 2:11, 19:16-24; Joel 1:15; 2:4; 3:1, 18; Zeph. 1:10, 14-16, 18; Zech. 12:3-11; 13:1, 2; 14:3-9, 13, 20, 21; Mal. 4:1-3). And it matters not where a person goes in the Prophets, *he will ALWAYS find this expression, or references to this expression, used ONLY ONE way.*

He will ALWAYS find this expression, or different references to this expression, used by the Prophets to reference different facets of JUDGMENT, followed by the RESULTS of this judgment, upon Israel and the nations. And he will ALWAYS find this expression used a particular way relative to TIME and PLACE.

2) *The Prophets and Revelation 1:10-4:11*

The introduction to and things stated about “the day of the Lord” in the Prophets *has to do with Israel and the nations, NOT with the Church.*

But, dropping back to Moses, the Church can be seen dealt with in relation to this day in the types. And that seen in Rev. 1-4 about the Church in “the day of the Lord” would have to be understood *in relation to the WHOLE of the matter seen in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.*

It can be NO other way!

The expression, “The day of the Lord,” as seen in the Prophets, *ALWAYS refers to events occurring during future time, NEVER to events occurring during past or present time.* The Prophets’ use of this expression — *ALWAYS* associated with *that future time* when the Lord judges Israel and the nations, followed by the results of that judgment — would then govern *HOW the expression would HAVE to be used relative to Christians in the New Testament.*

Or, to turn that around, any use of the expression relative to Christians in the New Testament *MUST be in complete keeping with HOW the expression is used relative to Israel and the nations in the Prophets. The expression MUST be used relative to JUDGMENT, followed by the RESULTS of that judgment.*

The first four chapters of the book of Revelation have to do with the Church being removed and judged in the heavens, *with the Millennium in view.* Then, continuing chapters move into a time when Israel and the nations will be judged on the earth, *also with the Millennium in view.*

And the entirety of the matter has to do with God’s judgment on the three divisions of mankind — Christian, Jew, and Gentile — *DURING “the day of the Lord.”*

Christians will be judged in heaven, at the end of this present dispensation, during “the day of the Lord,” PRECEDING the Tribulation.

Israel will be judged on earth, at the end of the past dispensation, during “the day of the Lord,” FOLLOWING the Tribulation (note that the seven-year Tribulation, the fulfillment of Daniel’s seventieth week, will fulfill the past Jewish dispensation).

And the Gentiles, as Israel, will also be judged on earth during “the day of the Lord,” following the tribulation.

And *the RESULTS of ALL judgment during “the day of the Lord” will have to do with that time toward which ALL Scripture, beginning with Moses, has moved. The RESULTS will have to do with a continuing aspect of “the day of the Lord,” with the 1,000-year seventh day from Gen. 2:1-3, with the Messianic Era.*

Now, let's look at each — *the Church, Israel, and the nations* — in the order that the three different judgments occur.

3) *Judgment of the Church*

Attention was previously called to the expression, “the day of the Lord,” appearing twenty-six times in the Prophets, with reference made to this day hundreds of times through other means (“that day,” etc.). And, again, this has to do *SOLELY with Israel and the nations, NOT with the Church.*

BUT, we find *EXACTLY* the same thing relative to the Church in the New Testament. The expression, or a form of the expression, appears ten times in the New Testament (Acts 2:20; I Cor. 1:8; 5:5; II Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6; 2:16; I Thess. 5:2; II Thess 2:2; II Peter 3:10; Rev. 1:10). And, aside from the first use in Acts 2:20 (a quotation from Joel, having to do with Israel, which Peter referenced at the beginning of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel), the remaining nine references to “the day of the Lord” *have to do with the Church.*

(Three of the preceding ten verses refer to “The day of [our Lord Jesus] Christ” rather than “the day of the Lord” [I Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; 2:16]. Contextually though, *there is NO difference. These are simply two ways of saying the SAME thing.*

There are two passages in the Pauline epistles which could be singled out and referred to as “resurrection and rapture passages” (I Cor. 15:51-58 and I Thess 4:13-18), though numerous other Scriptures refer to this time as well.

But note something about the passage in I Thess. 4:13-18 which is often overlooked or not dealt with properly.

The passage continues into chapter five, where the expression, "the day of the Lord," is used (v. 2). And this expression *COULDN'T possibly have to do with the unsaved following the rapture (Israel and/or the Gentiles during the Tribulation)*, for, as will be shown, Israel and the nations will be dealt with in relation to "the day of the Lord" *FOLLOWING the Tribulation*. And that seen in I Thess. 4:13-5:10 has to do *with a time BEFORE the Tribulation*.

Attempting to see "the day of the Lord" in I Thess. 5:2 ("wrath" in v. 9 as well) as referencing the Tribulation and having to do with the unsaved (something commonly taught in Christendom) emanates from a misunderstanding of how this expression is used in the Prophets (*ref. next section in this chapter, p. 59*).

Such a teaching has "Man's Day" and "the Lord's Day" existing *at the SAME "time" on earth during the last seven years of "Man's Day."* And "time" during both "Man's Day" and "the Lord's Day" simply *DOES NOT run concurrently on earth.* "Man's Day" *HAS to run its course and be brought to a close BEFORE "the Lord's Day" can begin on earth.*

(I Thessalonians 5:1-10, continuing from the previous chapter, has to do *with Christians removed FROM "Man's Day" and placed IN "the Lord's Day" at the end of the present dispensation, the same as seen in Rev. 1:10ff; 4:1ff.*

[In I Thess. 5, those about to suffer "destruction" (v. 3) *during "the day of the Lord"* (v. 2) has to do with those in "darkness," who "sleep," destined for "wrath" (vv. 4-9; *cf. II Thess 1:1-12*).

Then, note the clear inference in v. 4. *Those "awake" COULD have found themselves in the SAME position during "the day of the Lord" as those who were "asleep."*

That is to say, they could have become *unfaithful* (asleep, associated with the night, with darkness) rather than remaining *faithful* (awake, associated with the day, with light [cf. Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46]).

And had the faithful, those “awake,” found themselves in the position of the unfaithful, those “asleep,” they would have suffered “destruction,” “wrath” during “the day of the Lord.”

This verse has to do with *Christians and judgment in the heavens, NOT with Israel and the nations on earth.*

Now, note v. 10. The preceding individuals (those suffering “destruction,” “wrath”) are seen living with Christ, “together” with those of “the day,” who *did NOT* “sleep” (*did NOT* suffer “destruction,” “wrath”).

As well, the *SAME* Gk. words for “wake” and “sleep” are used throughout these different verses in the passage, referencing *faithfulness and/or unfaithfulness, with millennial verities in view.*

Verse 10 (*ALL* ultimately living “together” with Christ, regardless) *could ONLY* refer to that described in preceding verses *as having NO bearing on one's eternal salvation, for THAT is NOT what is in view in these verses*].

The Judgment of Christians in “the Lord's Day” will be dealt with in ten subsequent chapters in this first volume of the book [Chapters VI-XV].

Thus, the matter will not be dealt with further at this time.)

4) Judgment of Israel

As previously seen, the Church will be judged at the end of the present dispensation, in heaven, in Christ's presence, preceding the Tribulation. The Church is comprised of a heavenly people with heavenly promises and blessings, with their judgment, accordingly, being in the heavens. And this judgment will occur during “the day of the Lord.”

Israel, on the other hand, will be judged at the end of the past dispensation (at the end of Daniel's seventieth week), on earth, in Christ's presence, following the Tribulation. Israel is comprised of an earthly people with earthly promises and blessings, with their judgment, accordingly, being upon the earth, at the end of "Man's Day." And this judgment will occur during "the day of the Lord."

The things stated relative to the Church and "the day of the Lord" have been shown. Now, let's look at the same thing relative to Israel, then relative to the nations.

The "timing" for the beginning of "the day of the Lord" relative to Israel is seen in three verses in the closing two chapters of Malachi, closing the Old Testament Canon:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of host" (Mal. 3:1).

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5, 6).

And the TIME, along with events associated with that TIME, as set forth in Mal. 4:5, is not referenced as just "the day of the Lord," but as "the great and dreadful day of the LORD."

And *THIS day* is dealt with in Rev. 6:12-17:

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

(Note particularly "*the great and dreadful day of the LORD*" in Mal. 4:5 and "*the great day of his wrath*" in Rev. 6:17.)

NOW, note that the verses from Malachi regarding Elijah are applied to John the Baptist in the gospels:

"As it is written in the Prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Mark 1:2, 3).

"For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord...

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:15a-17).

Or, Isaiah spoke of that day, using similar words, adding information:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:3-5).

The verse in Isa. 40:3 and the companion verse in Mal. 3:1 are applied to John the Baptist in the New Testament. John, applying this ministry to himself, used the passage from Isaiah; and Christ, referring to John's ministry, used the passage from Malachi (Matt. 11:10; John 1:23).

John was the forerunner of Christ at His first coming, and Elijah will be the forerunner of Christ at His second coming. Both occupy the position of bringing about harmony, the same mind-set, between the Jewish people and their fathers in relation to the Word.

And apart from this happening, the inheritance seen in Gen. 1 and Rev. 5 CANNOT be redeemed. The curse from Gen. 3 WILL remain (cf. Mal. 4:5, 6; Luke 1:16, 17; Rev. 5:4).

Note Christ's words in Matt. 11:14 relative to John the Baptist in this respect:

"And if ye will receive it [the Messenger and His message regarding the kingdom], this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come."

Note the "if" in this verse.

Had the Jewish people received the Messenger and His message, Elijah, rather than John, would have appeared as His forerunner. But God, in His foreknowledge, knew what the Jewish people would do and sent John at this time instead.

Elijah will appear at a future time to complete John's ministry and bring about harmony, the same mind-set, between the Jewish people and their fathers in relation to the Word.

And this will allow God, through His Son, to complete the redemption of the inheritance, which will occur through the subsequent judgment of the Gentiles during the continuing “day of the Lord” (*ref. pp. 64b, 65a in this chapter*).

(Using the same verses relative to the ministries of both Elijah and John is similar to the use of the same verses relative to the experiences of both Israel and Christ in Hosea 11:1 and Matt. 2:15.

God's two firstborn Sons [*cf. Ex. 4:22; Heb. 1:6*] were called out of Egypt, separated by a period of some 1,500 years.)

NOW, back to Elijah being sent *BEFORE* “the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Mal. 4:5), which is referred to as “the great day of his wrath” in Rev. 6:17.

To properly understand *the TIMING* of that stated in these two verses, note that Christ's coming at the end of the Tribulation is dealt with three different places in the Book of Revelation (our text in Rev. 6:12-17, then Rev. 14:14-20 and Rev. 19:11-21; for information on how Revelation is structured in this respect, refer back to the parenthetical part on p. 23, Chapter II, in this first volume).

The breaking of the sixth seal of the scroll in Rev. 6:12-17 occurs at the very end of the Tribulation, *showing the disarray in the earth's government and the dismal conditions on earth; and the heavens are opened at this time, calling attention to Christ's return, as also seen in chapters fourteen and nineteen.*

And we can know that Christ returns at this time in the book, for the subsequent seventh seal (containing the trumpet and vial judgments [8:1ff]) *is broken AFTER Christ returns, while He is on earth, following the Tribulation.*

And we know this because some things in the Trumpet and vial judgments can occur *ONLY following the Tribulation while Christ is on earth dealing with Israel and the nations during that seventy-five day period at the end of Daniel (12:11-13).*

Thus, “the great and dreadful day of the LORD” in Mal. 4:5, called “the great day of his wrath” in Rev. 6:17, has to do with events during those seventy-five days.

This is the time when that foreshadowed by the seven Jewish festivals in Lev. 23 will be fulfilled (*ref.* the author’s article, “The Prophetic Calendar of Israel”), and this is the time when Israel’s judgment will occur (Ezek. 20:34-49).

(Both Moses and Elijah will accompany Christ when He returns at the end of the Tribulation, something clearly seen in Matt. 16:28-17:5. And both can only be seen occupying a large part with Christ as He deals with Israel and the nations at this time.

Both Moses and Elijah will evidently be the two witnesses sent to minister to Israel during the previous first half of the Tribulation in Rev. 11 (*ref.* Vol. III, Ch. I of this book), and this ministry could very well be preparatory to the Jewish people receiving Elijah and his message after he and Moses return with Christ at the end of the Tribulation.)

5) *Judgment of the Gentiles*

Little need be said about the judgment of the Gentiles, which will follow Israel’s judgment.

We can know that the judgment of the Gentiles will follow Israel’s judgment because “judgment must begin at the house of God” (I Peter 4:17), seen in the judgment of the Church before the Tribulation and the judgment of Israel following the Tribulation.

One part of the judgment of the nations is seen in Matt. 25:31-46, where, again, the order seen in I Peter 4:17 *MUST be in view, but now seen relative to the Gentiles.*

This judgment has to do with the saved from among the nations (saved mainly during the last half of the preceding Tribulation, evidently through the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists seen in Rev. 7, 14). And this judgment has

to do with their treatment of the Jewish people during the Tribulation, with the Messianic Era in view (*ref. Chs. XXIII, XXIV in the author's book, Prophecy on Mount Olivet*).

THEN, following this judgment of saved Gentiles, God's judgment of Gentile world power will come into view (Joel 3:1-17).

Gentile world power is taken care of at what is commonly referred to as "the battle of Armageddon." And this would be God's continuing judgment of the nations in another respect.

NOT ONLY will Gentile world power be completely done away with *at THIS time, with Israel THEN holding the sceptre, BUT* the land in the Abrahamic Covenant will be "cleansed of the blood that is shed therein...by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. 35:33b).

And this will be accomplished by "*blood*" from the invading Gentile armies running "even unto the Horse bridles," over a distance covering sixteen hundred furlongs, two hundred miles, as Christ treads "the winepress" (Rev. 14:20; cf. Isa. 63:1-6).

Then the ensuing Messianic Era itself constitutes 1,000 years of Judging, with Israel placed at the head of the nations and Christ with His co-heirs ruling over the nations "with a rod of iron" (*cf. Ps. 2:1-9; Rev. 2:26, 27*).

(Little commentary or documentation has been given for a number of things stated in the previous section of the chapter [particularly pp. 57b-65a].

Different things about all of this are dealt with in succeeding chapters in the different volumes of this book.)

In That Day

The coming 1,000-year "Lord's Day" is the time which Abraham and others saw, "*by faith, in Hebrews chapter eleven*."

Abraham, seeing this day, had "rejoiced" (John 8:56). And Christians, seeing this day *through the SAME means, "by faith," SHOULD exhibit the SAME mindset seen in Abraham*.

THAT day is coming, and the time can ONLY be very near at hand when today's faith (or, non-faith) will become tomorrow's reality.

The judgment of the Church, Israel, and the nations MUST occur FIRST, IN "the Lord's Day."

THEN, the continuing 1,000-year "Lord's Day"...

5

In the Lord's Day (II)

"One Like Unto the Son of Man..."

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.
And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like
unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to
the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white
as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in
a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out
of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his
countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And
he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear
not; I am the first and the last:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I
am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of
hell and of death.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the
things which are, and the things which shall be here-
after" (Rev. 1:12-19).

Everything about the revealed identity and description
of Christ in Rev. 1:12-18 is both *JUDICIAL* and *MESSIANIC* in
nature, and God's dispensational work relative to the Church
will have been completed at this time.

The Spirit will have *completed* His 2,000-year search for a bride for God's Son; and *the complete Church* (shown by *the seven candlesticks*) — *ALL Christians, both the resurrected and the ones living at this time* — will have been removed from "Man's Day" on earth and will find themselves in "the Lord's Day" in heaven.

Everything, from this point forward, *NOT ONLY* moves beyond the Spirit's work of procuring a bride for the Son *BUT* it also moves beyond Christ's work as High Priest on behalf of Christians — a work being performed *SOLELY* for Christians during the present dispensation *ALONE*.

And since Christ's high priestly work on behalf of Christians *CANNOT* exist beyond the present dispensation — beyond the time Christians are removed into the heavens (as seen in Revelation chapter one), bringing the dispensation to a close — the popular view which depicts Christ as High Priest in Rev. 1:12-18, rather than *Judge*, *CANNOT* possibly be correct.

Rather, matters at this point in time *can ONLY* have to do with Christ's *FUTURE* work as *JUDGE*, which will occur *AFTER* the dispensation has been completed *BUT PRECEDING* the Messianic Era.

And this is *EXACTLY* how matters are clearly presented in the latter part of this first chapter — *the COMPLETE Church* in Christ's presence, awaiting judgment, preceding the Tribulation, with a view to the Messianic Era.

The Son of Man

With the Church in Christ's presence, in "the Lord's Day," Christ is introduced in Rev. 1:13a by the title, "*the Son of man.*" That which follows this introductory title in verses 13b-16 is a description of "*the Son of man*" as He will appear in that coming day after the Church has been removed from "Man's Day" on earth and placed in Christ's presence in "the Lord's Day" in heaven.

“The Son of man” is a *Messianic* title, first seen in Scripture in Ps. 8:4, then in Dan. 7:13. Both of these Old Testament verses are set within Messianic passages and establish, in *an unchangeable fashion, EXACTLY how the title MUST be understood throughout the eighty-eight times that it appears in the New Testament.*

The title *MUST* be understood in the New Testament *after the EXACT manner in which it was previously introduced in the Old Testament.*

That is to say, *after being introduced as a Messianic title in the Old Testament, “the Son of man” MUST be understood as a Messianic title throughout its usage in the New Testament.*

This is simply one of the many ways in which God has structured His Word, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

This title appears eighty-four times throughout the gospel accounts, where Christ used the title numerous times referring to Himself.

Then, outside the gospel accounts in the New Testament, the title is only used four other times — Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6 (a quotation from Ps. 8:4); Rev. 1:13; 14:14.

Christ used the title in Luke 19:10 to describe *His mission* at the time of His first coming — “to seek and to save that which was lost” (associated, contextually, with salvation for the Jewish people in relation to the proffered kingdom).

The title is used in connection with *Christ's betrayal, death, and resurrection* in Matt. 12:40; 20:18; 26:2 (note that salvation provided through Christ's finished work at Calvary is for a *PURPOSE*; *salvation has to do with man ultimately being placed back in the position for which he was created, which will be realized in the Messianic Era* [note contextual usage of “the Son of man” in John 3:13, 14]).

It is used pertaining to events surrounding *Christ's second advent* in Matt. 24:27-44; Luke 12:40 (events surrounding Christ's return, with a view to the Messianic Era).

And it is used relative to the Father having committed *all judgment* to the Son in John 5:22-27 (judgment such as that of Christians at Christ's judgment seat, with a view to the Messianic Era).

The broad use of the title, "the Son of man," throughout Christ's earthly ministry at the time of His first coming would serve to illustrate a little-appreciated fact:

EVERYTHING surrounding His first coming — *His birth, His ministry to Israel, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension* — had MESSIANIC ramifications.

John 1:11 would serve to illustrate the point in one fashion:

"He came unto his own [neuter in Gk. text, *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in Gk. text, *His Own people, the Jewish people*] received him not."

His Own things had to do with those things associated with the title, "the Son of man."

They had to do *with His being born "King of the Jews"* (Matt. 2:2).

They had to do *with the message proclaimed throughout His earthly ministry*, a message to the Jewish people pertaining to the kingdom (Matt. 4:17-25; 10:5-8; Luke 10:1ff).

They had to do *with the throne of David* (Luke 1:31-33; cf. II Sam. 7:12-16; Zech. 6:12, 13).

They had to do *with the title placed over His head at the time of His crucifixion* (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19).

And They had to do *with the message which He proclaimed following His resurrection, preceding His ascension* (Luke 24:25-27, 44; Acts 1:3).

Then note Christ's question and the disciples' response in this same respect in Matt. 16:13-16:

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The reference to “Christ” in Peter's response had to do with acknowledging *Jesus as the Messiah*, the One Who would rule and reign; and the reference to “Son” had to do with *His firstborn status*. He was God's firstborn Son, the One Who would exercise the rights of primogeniture (kingly, priestly, and double portion rights), *ALL carrying MESSIANIC ramifications in complete keeping with the titles “Messiah” and “the Son of man.”*

Peter had acknowledged “the Son of Man's” true identity — *the One Who would rule and reign as the great King-Priest over the double portion of the Father's goods, in both heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom.*

Then, Peter's statement prompted Christ's response:

“...Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (v. 17b).

In Revelation chapter one, the Spirit moved John to introduce Christ *as JUDGE through calling attention to His Messianic title.*

Then the Spirit moved John to describe “*the Son of man*” *as He will appear in that coming day.*

And this is the person which all Christians will one day see, to be introduced by this same Messianic title, Who will be seen *EXACTLY* as described in the account.

(Events of that coming day CANNOT possibly occur after ANY other fashion than seen in Revelation chapter one, for John, having been placed in that future day and time, has already seen these things occur. And NO change can take place in that which has already occurred.)

And the “Son of man,” as well, is the person Who will subsequently return to the earth at the complete end of “Man’s Day” in order to bring all things portended by this title to pass, concluded by the ushering in of the Messianic Era (*cf.* Rev. 19b-20a).

1) *Manner in Which Clothed*

Christ, as “the Son of man,” is seen “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps [‘breasts’] with a golden girdle” (v. 13b).

This garment could describe the type clothing worn by either *a priest or a judge*. And the introductory title, “the Son of man,” could easily relate to either, *for there is really NO realm of Christ’s ministry at any point in time that does NOT, after some fashion, have for its GOAL the Messianic Era.*

It matters not whether events during past, present, or future time are being dealt with (future time preceding the Messianic Era). *ALL of God’s work from the very beginning in Genesis chapter one has ONE GOAL in view. ALL work (restorative work) throughout the six days in this chapter — which foreshadows ALL work (restorative work) throughout the six days, the 6,000 years of “Man’s Day” — has the MESSIANIC ERA in view.*

And that is clearly set forth in this opening section of Scripture, establishing a foundation upon which ALL subsequent Scripture rests.

The seventh day, the Sabbath, a day of rest, followed six days of restorative work in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture.

And, in that which this opening section of Scripture foreshadows, a seventh day, a seventh 1,000-year period — the Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God (Heb. 4:4-9), the Messianic Era — will follow six days of restorative work, 6,000 years of restorative work.

Thus, the title “the Son of man” could be used of Christ relative to His ministry either as *HIGH PRIEST* or as *JUDGE*, allowing this title to be used of Christ relative to work both present and future.

As *HIGH PRIEST*, performing a work solely for Christians, Christ is providing a present cleansing for the “many sons” whom He is about to bring “unto glory” (Heb. 2:10). He is providing a cleansing for all Christians who avail themselves of that being provided, which would be seen particularly in matters surrounding His bride, for whom the Spirit is presently searching (*cf.* Gen. 24:1ff; John 13:8-11; I John 1:5-10). And this is a work which, as all His works preceding the Messianic Era, has *the Messianic Era in view*.

As *JUDGE* in a future day, *ALL Christians* will stand in His presence to render an account. And the Spirit’s work during the present dispensation *will, EXACTLY as seen in the type in Gen. 24, be shown to have been successful*.

The works of Christians will be tried “by [‘in’] fire.” And through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, numerous Christians will be shown qualified to be among those comprising that part of Christ’s body which will *NOT ONLY* be revealed as His bride *BUT* complete the Son, allowing Him to reign (*cf.* I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11; Heb. 2:10).

(*EXACTLY as in the type*, the second Man, the last Adam will have a bride taken from His body which, when presented

back to Him, will provide *a completeness not heretofore existing, allowing Him to ascend the throne — the man and the woman together — as ONE complete being.*)

Though both the title “the Son of man” and the description of Christ in “a garment down to the foot” could relate to or describe Christ as either *High Priest* or *Judge*, two things in the text show that *ONLY the latter can possibly be in view.*

First, note the timing of the scene. Events depicted, contextually, *can occur ONLY beyond the present dispensation.* And as previously shown, Christ’s ministry as High Priest is for Christians during a particular time, *during time covered by the present dispensation, NOT beyond.*

Thus, the scene *CANNOT possibly have to do with Christ’s high priestly work.*

Second, the girdle is seen about Christ’s breasts, which is the position of the girdle on the dress of a judge, NOT a priest. A priest wore the girdle about his waist, and would often use the girdle to tuck things into (*e.g.*, a towel, parts of his priestly robe) as he went about his work.

This was the apparent scene when Christ girded himself with a towel and washed His disciples’ feet in John 13:4-12, foreshadowing His future priestly work on behalf of Christians.

(Note in Rev. 15:6 that the seven angels having the seven last plagues [the concluding judgments during the Tribulation] are each clothed in “pure and white linen” and are girded with “golden girdles” *about their breasts.* The scene is *one of judgment*, and the girdles are seen in their proper place for this type activity.)

2) *Descriptive Characteristics*

The description of the One seen in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, following His identifying title (“the

Son of man”) and the description of His dress, begins with a statement which can only refer to *both His longevity and holiness* — “His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow” (v. 14a).

The One Who has always existed and always will exist, the One without beginning or ending (John 1:1, 2, 14), the One without sin, Who judged sin at Calvary (II Cor. 5:21), *is about to judge Christians relative to works* (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11).

It is common in Scripture to introduce a member of the Godhead through the means seen here, through stating something characteristic of the person.

Note, for example, how the prayer often referred to as “the Lord’s prayer” in Matt. 6:9-13 begins: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (v. 9b). The Father is addressed, and a characterizing statement about the Father follows.

Then, the subject of the prayer begins: “Thy kingdom come...” (v. 10a).

Or, note how each of the seven letters to the Churches begins in Revelation chapters two and three. Each begins with a descriptive statement concerning Christ, taken either directly from chapter one or from that portended by the things stated in this chapter.

Only THEN does the subject matter of each epistle begin.

And, as in Matt. 6:9-13, after one statement concerning a member of the Godhead in Rev. 1:14 (“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow”), the text then goes immediately into the subject matter at hand — *JUDGMENT*.

The One in the midst of the seven candlesticks is seen having eyes “as a flame of fire,” feet “like unto fine brass,” a voice “as the sound of many waters,” a sharp two-edged sword coming from “his mouth,” and a countenance described “as the sun shining in his strength.”

“Fire,” “brass,” and “a sword” ALL speak of *different aspects of judgment*. “Fire” and “brass” are seen relative to a *judgment for sin in the tabernacle ministry in Israel*.

Fire burned on the altar in the courtyard in connection with sacrifices, and both the altar and the laver (also in the courtyard) were constructed of brass. This is where sin was judged through sacrifices and washings.

Then note the use of “a sword” in a *judgmental scene at the time of Christ’s return* in Rev. 19:15.

During Christ’s earthly ministry, on one occasion the Pharisees and chief priests sent men to take Him and bring Him into their presence. But the men returned empty-handed, saying, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:32, 45, 46).

On a subsequent occasion, when Judas led a band of men to take Christ, the men were caused to *fall backward to the ground* at the sound of His voice when He identified Himself by saying, “I am he [*lit.*, ‘I Am’]” (John 18:3-8).

(The correct translation of Jesus’ response in John 18:5, 6, 8 is “I Am,” not “I am he,” identifying Himself with the God of the O.T. in Ex. 3:14. And there is a repeated emphasis on the pronoun, “I.” Brought over into English, the response would be similar to saying, “I Myself, I Am.”)

And Peter experienced Christ’s piercing eyes after he had, three times, denied the One Whom, only a short time earlier, he had emphatically declared that *he would never deny* (Matt. 26:35; Luke 22:33).

It is recorded in Luke 22:61, following this triad of denials, “And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter...” And it is evident from the text that *Peter fully observed and experienced the Lord’s actions*.

The word for “look” in the Greek text is not the regular word for “look” (*blepo*). Rather, it is an intensified form of this word (*emblepo*).

Christ didn't just look at Peter. He looked into Peter's eyes in a manner *which penetrated his very being*. And Peter knew it, *he experienced it*, which caused him *to go out and weep bitterly*.

Every Christian in that coming day will stand before Christ *as Judge*, with His piercing eyes, "as a flame of fire," and His voice, "as the sound of many waters." And Peter's reaction to Christ's piercing and penetrating look in a past day will be the experience of numerous disobedient Christians in a future day, causing them to do *EXACTLY* the same thing which Peter did — *go out and weep bitterly*.

Then, as if that will not be enough, His countenance, with a body enswathed in a covering of glory, will be "as the sun shineth in his strength" (v. 16); and judgment meted out will consist of completely righteous decisions and determinations by the One Who has existed from eternity, identified with the God of the Old Testament.

Seven Stars, Seven Candlesticks

Christ is seen holding *seven stars* in His right hand as He stands in the midst of *seven candlesticks*. He holds one and walks in the midst of the other. And that which the metaphors are used to represent is clearly stated in the closing words of chapter one, immediately prior to the seven short epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three:

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars *are the angels of the seven Churches*: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest *are the seven Churches*" (v. 20).

The Book of Revelation is filled with angelic activity, and there is *NO reason* to think that *these seven angels* represent anything other than "angels." They are specifically stated

to be angels of Churches, and in chapters two and three, each epistle is addressed to the angel of a particular Church.

This would be in perfect keeping with the reference to angels in Heb. 1:14:

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, ...‘to minister for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation’].”

And note something about the seven epistles in chapters two and three.

The things in these two chapters form a continuation from chapter one. And though it is evident that *a history of Christendom* is shown through activity in seven Churches existing in the first century at the time John wrote, the epistles, in their contextual setting, *can ONLY show more particularly things future — things about the judgment seat, continuing from chapter one.*

Each epistle is structured *EXACTLY the same way:*

- 1) *I know thy works.*
- 2) *A call to repentance, or to heed the Lord's command.*
- 3) *Then, an overcomer's promise.*

Thus, that dealt with at the judgment seat will be:

- 1) *Works, which will reveal ALL things.*
- 2) *Works which will show whether those being judged did or did not repent or obey the Lord's command.*
- 3) *Works which will be judged with a view to the person realizing or not realizing the overcomer's promises, which have to do with realizing or not realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming age.*

Angelic activity seen in Heb. 1:14 is with a view to *EXACTLY the same thing* seen in Revelation chapters one through three relative to Christians.

And an angel occupying an appointed position in relation to each of the seven Churches would be in perfect keeping with this thought.

In that respect, there would be an angel placed over each Church, and there would be other angels ministering to Christians within each Church, with the ministry of all the angels having *ONE GOAL in view* — *Christians overcoming during "Man's Day" in order that they might realize an inheritance during "the Lord's Day"* (cf. Heb. 2:5).

(A popular interpretation of the seven angels seeks to identify them as *the pastors* of the seven Churches. This would be somewhat based on the fact that the Greek word translated "angel" [*aggelos*] means "messenger" and is used of men in that respect a few times in Scripture [Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; James 2:25].

However, this type understanding of *aggelos* occurs in only a scattering of the numerous times that the word appears in the N.T., referring mainly to "angels," not men.

In the Book of Revelation, the word *aggelos* appears sixty-six times beyond chapters one through three, and the word *is NOT* used a single time throughout this remaining part of the book referring to men [unless possibly in a verse such as Rev. 10:1].

Also, to say that the word *aggelos* in chapters one through three refers to the pastors of the seven Churches would be out of line with the manner in which the N.T. presents pastors in the Churches. *In the N.T., when pastors are spoken of in connection with Churches, there is NO such thing as a Church with one pastor. Churches in the N.T. are always seen having more than one pastor, or elder* [cf. Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14].)

Thus, that depicted in Revelation chapters one through three evidently has to do *with angelic activity in the Churches, angelic activity among Christians during the present dispensation.*

And this activity has to do with a ministry among Christians, with a view to Christians overcoming and realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming age.

A history of the Church throughout the dispensation is presented through the manner in which chapters two and three are structured; but, more particularly and contextually, the two chapters simply present *a continuation from chapter one and have to do with details surrounding the coming judgment of Christians*, with material in the chapters dropping back and including the necessity of present preparation.

(For information on God's use of angels in matters of the preceding nature, refer to Appendix I in this first volume, "Actions Under Established Laws."

This appendix article shows *HOW* God uses angels, under established laws, with their actions becoming God's actions.)

Write...

After John had seen the complete Church in heaven, appearing before Christ in judgment, he was told to "Write..." *And that which he wrote provides a threefold outline of the book.*

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter [*lit.*, 'after these things']" (v. 19).

"The things which thou hast seen" could only refer to the things in chapter one, preceding verse nineteen, for that is all John had seen thus far.

Then, "the things which are," will have to be understood two ways, in keeping with the two ways chapters two and three are to be understood:

1) "The things which are" would, first of all, have to be understood as the things which John was witnessing at that time, in the future, in "the Lord's Day" (which would be the things which he had seen in the previous verses, *i.e.*, in this respect, "the things which are" would be the same as "the things which thou hast seen").

John had seen *the complete Church in heaven appearing before Christ in judgment. And this, of necessity, would have to extend into and include that seen in chapters two and three — the seven epistles to the seven Churches (ref. subsequent chapters in this volume of the book, Chapters VIII-XIV).*

2) Then, "the things which are," as well, would have to do with the secondary manner in which chapters two and three are to be understood — *showing a history of Christendom relative to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom during the present dispensation.*

This history would begin with Ephesus, which *had left its "first love,"* and end with Laodicea, which was *"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (2:4; 3:17).*

In this respect, "the things which are," from John's perspective, though at a future time, *would reach back into the present dispensation.*

(Refer to the next two chapters in this volume of the book, Chapters VI, VII, for additional information on the preceding.)

Then, "the things which shall be hereafter [Gk., *meta tauta*, 'after these things']" could only refer to events beginning in chapter four where this expression (*meta tauta*) is used twice in the first verse.

“The things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’]” would refer to events occurring *AFTER the present dispensation and AFTER subsequent events surrounding the judgment seat (chs. 1-3); and these following events would encompass that seen throughout the remainder of the book (chs. 4-22).*

6

The Judgment Seat of Christ

“I Know Thy Works...”

“Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus... Smyrna... Pergamos... Thyatira... Sardis... Philadelphia... Laodicea write...” (Rev. 2:1a, 8a, 12a, 18a; 3:1a, 7a, 14a).

The seven epistles directed to seven Churches in Asia in Revelation chapters two and three form a continuation from introductory, foundational material in chapter one. And *IF* this connection between chapter one and chapters two and three is *NOT understood, the main thrust of that presented in these seven short epistles will be missed.*

In the first chapter, the seven Churches are seen in heaven, in Christ's presence, in *“the Lord's Day”* (v. 10), *NOT here on earth, separated from Christ's presence, during “Man's Day”* (separated from a personal, bodily presence, as seen in this chapter [vv. 13-18]).

And these seven Churches are further seen in Christ's presence *when He is exercising a position as JUDGE* (a future role which Christ will occupy at the conclusion of the present dispensation), *NOT a position as High Priest* (Christ's office and work throughout the present dispensation in the heavenly sanctuary, on behalf of Christians [ref. previous chapter, Ch. V]).

Thus, *the entire scene is NOT ONLY future and judicial BUT removed from the earth and in the heavens.*

Since *the complete Church*, shown by the number of the Churches (“seven,” showing *the completeness of that which is in view*), is seen in heaven, this *can ONLY* have to do with events following the removal of the Church from the earth at the end of the dispensation.

And since the complete Church is seen in Christ's presence at this time, with Christ occupying a *JUDICIAL* role, *this can ONLY have to do with the future appearance of ALL Christians before the judgment seat of Christ* (II Cor. 5:10, 11).

This, in turn, provides the basis for the continuation of the same subject matter in chapters two and three, where specific information is provided relative to each of the seven Churches previously introduced in chapter one.

And though it is evident that *a history of Christendom* is shown through activity in these seven Churches existing in the first century at the time John penned these two chapters, the epistles, in their contextual setting, *can ONLY show more particularly things future — things surrounding the judgment seat, continuing from chapter one.*

Each epistle is structured *EXACTLY the same way, following a brief, descriptive depiction of the Son:*

- 1) *Beginning with Christ's statement, "I know thy works."*
- 2) *Then, a call to repentance, or to heed the Lord's command.*
- 3) *Then, an overcomer's promise.*

(Note also in chapters two and three that *Christ speaks to the Churches as Judge* [e.g., cf. 1:13-16, 20; 2:1, 12, 18], *a role which He will NOT occupy UNTIL the present dispensation has drawn to a close.*)

And this is in perfect keeping with the judicial scene presented in chapter one, introducing chapters two and three, with chapter one providing necessary foundational material which would allow an individual to properly understand Christ's words to the seven Churches within their contextual setting.

That dealt with at the judgment seat will be 1) *works*, which will show whether those being judged 2) *did or did not*

obey the Lord's commands. And this will be with 3) *a view to realizing or not realizing the overcomer's promises, which have to do with realizing or not realizing an inheritance with Christ during the coming age, in His kingdom.*

I Know Thy Works

The basis for ALL judgment in Scripture is WORKS.

God judged sin at Calvary on the basis of His Son's finished WORK (John 19:30).

Christians will be judged at the end of the present dispensation on the basis of WORKS (I Cor. 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11).

Israel will be judged following the future Tribulation on the basis of WORKS (Ezek. 20:34-38; 44:9-16).

Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation will be judged on the basis of WORKS (Joel 3:1ff; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:4-6).

And even the unsaved will be judged following the Millennium on the basis of WORKS (Rev. 20:11-15).

Faith though CANNOT be separated from works in the preceding respect (except for the unsaved, who are in no position to exercise faith), for "without faith it is impossible to please him [God]" (Heb. 11:6a).

But, in relation to *judgment*, God looks at the final analysis of the matter. *Works emanate out of faith*, with works forming that which *results from faith* (James 2:14-26). And it is *these resulting works* which are at the forefront when *judgment* is in view.

A saved person can either exercise faithfulness or unfaithfulness, with works emanating from both.

In I Cor. 3:12, this is set forth in *the two types of works* presented. *One type* is depicted by the words "gold, silver, precious stones," and *the other type* is depicted by the words "wood, hay, stubble."

WORKS will be tried by fire at the judgment seat (v. 13).

That depicted by “gold, silver, precious stones,” *emanating out of faithfulness*, will pass through the fire unscathed; but that depicted by “wood, hay, stubble,” *resulting from unfaithfulness*, will be consumed by the fire.

Those individuals shown to have possessed works described by the former (“gold, silver, precious stones”) will experience the end result of the salvation of their souls, which will allow them to have a part in activities attendant the bride and Christ’s coming reign.

But those individuals shown to have possessed works described by the latter (“wood, hay, stubble”) will, instead, “suffer loss” (the loss of their souls), though they themselves will be “saved [their eternal salvation unaffected]; yet so as by [‘through’] fire” (I Cor. 3:15).

Relative to the unsaved, “faith” is not in the picture. But, still, even though “faith” is absent, *ALL that can remain to come under judgment are WORKS*.

Thus, the unsaved, as the saved, are judged on the basis of *WORKS*, for there is *NOTHING* else upon which they could be judged.

The unsaved *CAN’T be judged on the basis of prior unbelief in Christ, NO more so than can the saved be judged on the basis of prior belief in Christ*.

According to John 3:18, the unsaved *have already been judged* (as the matter pertains to Christ and His finished work at Calvary, *for they have NOT believed*), and *NO judgment* awaits the saved (also as the matter pertains to Christ and His finished work at Calvary, *for they have believed*).

This remains true of both the saved and the unsaved because *God has ALREADY judged sin in the person of His Son*.

Thus, *THIS is a COMPLETED and CLOSED matter, for God has ALREADY been satisfied. And, resultingly, there can be NO further judgment on this issue:*

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘is not judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned already [‘has already been judged’], because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.”

The second word “condemned [‘judged’]” and the subsequent word “believed” (both used relative to the unsaved) are both in the perfect tense in the Greek text, pointing to action completed in past time with the results of this action existing during present time in a finished state.

Consequently, for the unsaved, this *will NEVER* be an issue in future time. It *CAN’T* be an issue in future time. Such would be impossible.

Again, relative to their eternal destiny, *the unsaved have ALREADY been judged* (past) because of unbelief (past). *NOTHING* surrounding judgment, as it pertains to this matter, can be carried beyond this point in past time.

And *EXACTLY* the same future non-judgmental situation exists for the saved relative to their eternal destiny, for the same reason.

The saved, *EXACTLY* as the unsaved, *have ALREADY been judged*. But in their case, *belief, NOT unbelief*, enters into the matter.

And, *EXACTLY* as in the case of the unsaved, *NOTHING* surrounding judgment, as it pertains to this entire matter, can be carried beyond this point in past time.

For the saved though, unlike the unsaved, judgment has taken place through a Substitute Who has paid sin’s penalty (death) on their behalf. And *everything* surrounding the matter has been taken care of *in past time*, by Another, *with God being satisfied*.

(In the preceding respect, as seen in John 3:18, because judgment has taken place for the saved through a Substitute, *there can be NO past judgment for the individual per se*.)

But, for the unsaved, since a Substitute *is NOT in view*, this past judgment would have to pertain *to the individual himself*. And this is why this same verse refers to a past judgment for *the unsaved alone*.)

Because the basis *for ALL* “judgment” in Scripture is *WORKS*, and because *judgment* is centrally in view in Revelation chapters two and three (contextually, continuing from chapter one), Christ’s words in each of the seven epistles begins with the statement, “I know thy works.”

With *judgment* centrally in view — *NOT* judgment relative to their eternal salvation (an impossibility) *BUT* judgment relative to that which lies out ahead, relative to the Messianic Era — *these epistles could begin NO other way*.

(Refer to Appendix III in this volume of the book, “Faith and Works,” for more information on the preceding.)

Repent...Heed the Lord's Command

God’s Son, described in Revelation chapter one, Whose eyes were as “a flame of fire,” knew *EXACTLY* what had been and was presently occurring in each of the seven Churches. The Son, with *EXACTLY* the same full knowledge (omniscience) possessed by the Father — for He was, is, and always will be the Father manifested in the flesh — *knew ALL that there was to know about everyone and everything in each of the seven Churches*.

And after He states to each, “I know thy works,” He makes their works known, dealing with those in each Church on the basis of their works.

EXACTLY the same thing will occur yet future relative to that which this section of the book deals with.

ALL Christians will stand before Christ in judgment, *EXACTLY* as the matter is revealed in chapter one. They will

stand before the One Whose eyes are as “a flame of fire,” eyes which can and apparently will penetrate into the very soul of each individual (cf. Luke 22:61, 62).

In fact, the material in Revelation chapter one could be made even more specific, for that stated in this chapter concerning the Church in Christ’s presence is *NOT just a statement concerning how things will be in that future day. Rather, THIS IS the actual scene surrounding the future appearance of ALL Christians in Christ’s presence, before His judgment seat.*

John was moved from the present time into a future time, in “the Lord’s Day.” And in this future time he was allowed to see different things occurring before they actually occurred.

But that can be turned around, saying, the things which John was allowed to see, *YET to occur, will HAVE to occur for the simple reason that they have ALREADY occurred.* And one can *NO more* change these things set in the future (which have already occurred) than he can change things set in the past (which, as well, have already occurred).

The first thing which John saw in this respect was Christians appearing before Christ in judgment.

In other words, that seen in the latter part of chapter one is *NOT just something similar to or like that which will occur.*

Rather, THIS IS THAT which will occur!

And John was shown that which will occur — *recording that which will occur, to be made available to ALL Christians during the opening years of the present dispensation* (directed to “seven Churches,” showing *completeness*) — *in order that ALL Christians throughout the dispensation might have an eye-witness account of that which they will one day experience, leaving them even further without excuse at the judgment seat.*

This introductory material then allows the seven epistles to seven Churches in Asia, which immediately follow, to each be structured after a manner which continues the thought of *judgment* from chapter one.

And *NOT ONLY* is this structure seen in each of these seven epistles, *BUT* at least two other things can be seen in these epistles as well, which reflect on events during present time, preceding events surrounding the judgment seat:

1) The order in which these epistles appear depicts a history of the Church throughout the dispensation (from Ephesus, which left its “first love,” to Laodicea, described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”).

2) Dealing with these seven existing Churches in the manner seen *NOT ONLY* allowed the Lord to deal directly with all the Churches during the time in which John lived *BUT* also to provide vital information for all the Churches which would exist throughout subsequent time during the complete dispensation.

And, as both the text and context clearly show, this would be with a view *to future judgment and the Messianic Era*.

Everything about these epistles — their structure, that stated about each, the order in which they were given, the reason for the call to repent, the reason for the exhortation and commands — points out ahead *to the judgment seat* and then *to the Messianic Era* beyond.

The deterioration seen within the existing Churches and also seen in the order of their arrangement in chapters two and three necessitates *the call to repentance, the exhortations, and the commands*.

Then, this call for repentance, the exhortations, and the commands look ahead *to the judgment seat, with ALL of the overcomer’s promises being MESSIANIC within their scope of fulfillment*.

Everything at the end of Scripture remains *in complete keeping* with that seen at the beginning of Scripture — *a seventh day of rest following six days of restorative work.*

And there is *NOTHING* within these seven epistles which moves beyond that point within the scope of their fulfillment (*i.e.*, there is *NOTHING* in these epistles which moves beyond the seventh day, the Messianic Era). There is *NOTHING* in these epistles about eternal life, the ages beyond the Messianic Era, etc.

ALL of the material in these epistles is about events occurring during time within that foreshadowed by work during the six days in Genesis chapter one, progressing to that foreshadowed by rest during the seventh day in Genesis chapter two, NOT about things which will occur during the eternal ages beyond this time.

(For a correct and proper interpretation throughout Scripture in the preceding respect, one *MUST* remain within the time-frame set forth in the first thirty-four verses in Scripture, in Gen. 1:1-2:3 [six and seven days foreshadowing six and seven thousand years].

A septenary structure is set forth in these opening verses, establishing at the very outset a foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests.

[For information on the preceding, refer to the first four chapters in the author's book, *The Study of Scripture.*

Also, the N.T. opens *EXACTLY* the same way that the O.T. opens. Refer to Appendix V, "Structure, Place of John's Gospel," in the same book].

There are a few places in Scripture which deal with events outside the scope of the septenary structure in Gen. 1:1-2:3 [*i.e.*, events both preceding "Man's Day" and events following "the Lord's Day," the Messianic Era]. But when Scripture does move outside the septenary structure set forth at the beginning [*e.g.*, Ezek. 28:14-19; Rev. 21, 22], it is always quite evident that this is being done.

And this has apparently been done at times so that man can better tie the whole of the matter together, understanding why things existed as they did preceding “Man’s Day” on the one hand, and understanding the goal toward which everything moves following the Messianic Era on the other hand, *AFTER the Son delivers a RESTORED kingdom up to His Father* [I Cor. 15:24-28].)

This is the reason that neither the Hebrew text of the O.T. nor the Greek text of the N.T. contains a word for “*eternal*,” for *NEITHER* is about the unending cycle of ages which comprise eternity. *BOTH* are about two ages — Man’s Day, lasting 6,000 years, and the Lord’s Day, lasting 1,000 years.

For information on the preceding, refer to Ch. V in the author’s book, *The Study of Scripture*. Also see the author’s book, *From the Beginning*.)

To Him That Overcometh

The manner in which most interpret the seven overcomer’s promises, one to each of the seven Churches in chapters two and three, centers around these promises relating to one’s eternal salvation.

Most erroneously interpret these promises as either:

- 1) A call to unsaved individuals within the seven Churches to be saved and realize these different promises.
- 2) Or, as statements to saved individuals in these Churches, showing that they will realize these different promises simply on the basis of the fact that they have been saved.

And I John 5:1-5 forms verses usually referenced in an effort to substantiate the second part of the preceding.

This line of erroneous teaching emanates mainly from man’s failure to see anything in Scripture except salvation by grace, *i.e.*, saved-unsaved issues.

Practically everything is made to relate to this one subject.

And this type teaching, brought over into the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three, results in *NOT ONLY* the Church often being viewed from an incorrect perspective (usually seeing the Church comprised of both saved and unsaved individuals) *BUT* it also leaves little room for the overcomer's promises to be viewed from a correct perspective.

However, contrariwise, within the New Testament usage of the word "Church," as it is used relating to *the one new man* "in Christ," *there is NO such thing* as a Church comprised of *BOTH saved and unsaved individuals*.

A person is EITHER within OR without the Church, depending on his saved or unsaved state.

He is either a Jew, a Gentile (both without the Church), or a Christian (saved Jews and Saved Gentiles within the Church [I Cor. 10:32]).

NOR can unsaved individuals be thought of as *professors* instead of *possessors* and find themselves within the Church after the manner in which the word "Church" is used in the New Testament.

Scripture knows NOTHING about professors as opposed to possessors. Scripture knows ONLY possessors (the saved) and non-possessors (the unsaved).

(The word "Church" is a translation of the Greek word, *ekklesia* [a compound word from *ex* ("out") and *klesis* ("to call")]. Thus, the word means "called out," often thought of or used in the sense of "an assembly.")

The Hebrew equivalent [*qahal*] is used numerous time of Israel in the O.T., and the word *ekklesia* is used of both Israel and the Christians in the N.T. — of Christians *alone* following the Acts period.

And the latter usage is the manner in which the word "Church" is used in this chapter.)

The overcomer's promises, in the preceding respect, would, thus, *relate to Christians ALONE*.

Further, these promises are worded after a fashion which clearly reveals that Christians can go in *ONLY* one of two directions relative to the promises. *They can EITHER overcome and realize the promises OR they can be overcome* [by the world, the flesh, and/or the Devil] and fail to realize the promises.

As previously stated, I John 5:1-5 is often erroneously referenced by those seeking to show that the thought of *overcoming* in Revelation chapters two and three relates to eternal salvation.

Note how these verses read:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

“Overcoming” is used in verses four and five, and the word is used in connection with believing “that Jesus is the Christ” (v. 1), “that Jesus is the Son of God” (v. 5). Those believing are then said to be “begotten of him,” “born of God” (vv. 1, 4)

And the thought of *a bringing forth from above* (“*begotten of him,*” “*born of God*”), used four times in these verses, is the key to show how the verses should *correctly* be understood.

The expression, “begotten of him,” “born of God,” referring to *a bringing forth from above*, is used ten times in I John (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1-5 [four times], 18 [twice]).

The expression also appears in three other New Testament books — four times in John’s gospel (1:13; 3:3, 5, 7), two times in I Peter (1:3, 23), and once in James (1:18).

And *EVERY time* the expression is used in John, I Peter, James, and I John, both textually and contextually, *the saved*, NOT the unsaved, are in view.

I John 5:1-5 is actually a companion passage to John 20:30, 31. These two verses in John’s gospel have to do solely with Israel during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, providing the reason for the eight signs in John’s gospel. And I John 5:1-5 (apparently written at or about the same time as John’s gospel) would have to do with Christians after the same fashion.

The epistle of I John, written to Christians, with signs *NOT* in view, has parallels with John’s gospel, written to Jews, where signs are in view. And John 5:1-5, paralleling John 20:30,31, forms one of those parallels (*ref. the author’s book, Signs in John’s Gospel*).

I John 5:1-5 would have to do with Christians throughout the dispensation and has to do with instructions concerning how Christians can overcome *the world* — “*by faith*” (v. 4), with instructions given elsewhere concerning how Christians can overcome *the flesh by mortification* (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5) and *the Devil by resistance* (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9).

(Refer to the author’s book, *Brought Forth from Above*, for a comprehensive treatment of this subject in all four N.T. books.

Also, some of the same material on I John 5:1-5, containing additional information, can be found in the next chapter of this book, Chapter VII, pp. 102b-105a.)

Again, as in all of the other passages pertaining to being *brought forth from above*, the unsaved *are NOT* in view at all in any of these passages having to do with overcoming.

Overcoming the world “by faith” allows works to emanate out of faith, bringing faith to its goal (Heb. 10:35-39; 11:1ff; James 2:14-26; I Peter 1:9). This, in turn, will result in the faithful Christian being approved at Christ’s judgment seat and, consequently, *realizing the promises to overcomers.*

(Each of the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3 is *structured EXACTLY the same way* — revealed works, followed by an overcomer’s promise.

ALL seven of the promises to overcomers center around regality [Christ taking the kingdom], and four of the promises have to do with that which the overcomers will need in order to occupy the numerous positions with Christ in the kingdom.

That seen in these promises are the things which will prepare the overcomers to reign as co-heirs with Christ — *properly dressed and recognized for their befitting position and, occupying such a position, possessing the necessary wisdom and knowledge to rule and reign in a perfectly just and righteous manner.*

As well, as God not only bestowed upon Solomon “wisdom and knowledge” but also “riches, and wealth, and honour” as he reigned over his people [II Chron. 1:10-14], *so will it be with the overcomers. Through their proper dress, recognition, possession of wisdom and knowledge to reign in a perfectly just and righteous manner, they will, beyond degree, possess “riches, and wealth, and honour.”*

In this respect, by the very nature of these seven promises, *one CANNOT be realized apart from the others. ALL seven promises MUST be realized together, by every overcomer (the number “seven” calling attention to the completion of that which is in view).*

There will be COMPLETE perfection in ALL things relative to the rule of Christ and His co-heirs, and that seen in these seven promises is God’s revealed way to bring this to pass.)

7

To Him That Overcometh

Overcoming the World, the Flesh, the Devil

“Unto the angel of the church in Ephesus... Smyrna... Pergamos... Thyatira... Sardis... Philadelphia... Laodicea write...

I know thy works...

To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 2, 3).

Revelation chapters two and three contain seven messages to seven Churches located in Asia during the first century; and these messages were directed to these Churches through seven different angels — angels who had been placed over these seven Churches.

This introduces a facet of angelic ministry within Christendom which is often overlooked.

According to Heb. 1:14, angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, ‘to minister for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation’].”

Then, according to Revelation chapters two and three, each Church possesses an appointed, ministering angel; and the context clearly infers that these angels have been placed in their respective positions, centrally, for the same reason as set forth in Heb. 1:14.

Angelic ministry in Christendom centers around the coming inheritance of the saints, the salvation of the soul, etc.

Hebrews 1:14 refers *to the individual nature* of angelic ministry (*cf.* Acts 12:15), and Revelation chapters two and three refer *to the corporate nature* of angelic ministry.

Many expositors over the years have sought to teach that the word “angel” in Revelation chapters two and three (see also Rev. 1:16, 20) is a reference to individual pastors (or possibly other high officials) in each of the seven Churches. The Greek word translated “angel” (*aggelos*) refers to a *messenger of God*, and these seven messengers are looked upon by these individuals as seven human messengers from the seven Churches.

This view though, for several reasons, is *NOT at all tenable*:

Revelation chapter one provides a distinction between the seven angels and individuals comprising the seven Churches. In this chapter, rather than being integrally identified, the seven angels and the seven Churches are seen as separate, distinct entities.

The seven Churches are represented by the “seven golden candlesticks” in Christ’s midst, but the seven angels are represented by the “seven stars” in Christ’s right hand (vv. 13, 16, 20).

Interpreting the word *aggelos* as a reference to individual pastors (seven pastors of seven Churches) is *NOT* in keeping with that which is taught concerning pastors elsewhere in the New Testament. Churches throughout the New Testament are *NEVER* spoken of as having *ONLY one pastor*. The thought is *ALWAYS* “pastors” (or “elders”) of a Church (*cf.* Acts 14:23; 15:6, 23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1).

(The New Testament refers to *Churches in a region* [*e.g.*, “the churches of Macedonia” or “the churches of Galatia” (II Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2)], but reference is made to *ONLY one Church in a city or village* [*e.g.*, “the church of the Thessalonians” or “the church of (‘in’) Ephesus” (II Thess. 1:1; Rev. 2:1)].

ALL Christians in one city comprised one Church which met in various homes throughout the city, requiring the ministries of pastors within that one Church. And the simplicity and oneness of the Church in a city was characterized by the fact that ALL Christians in that city were automatically looked upon as being members of that Church [Rom. 14:1; 15:7; 16:2; I Cor. 16:10, 11; III John 5-8].

This is the apparent fashion after which each of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three was structured; and since there *were NO* individual pastors of these Churches, the use of the word *aggelos* in each epistle *could NOT* possibly be thought of as a reference to the pastor of the Church being addressed.)

Then, the manner in which the Greek word *aggelos* is used throughout the New Testament should be considered, particularly the way in which the word is used in the Book of Revelation.

This word appears over one hundred eighty times in the New Testament, and seventy-six of these occurrences are in the Book of Revelation alone.

There are only eight instances in the entire New Testament where the word *aggelos* is either clearly or seemingly used of men as messengers of God (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; 24:4; Acts 10:3, 7, 22 [*cf. v. 30*]; James 2:25). In all other occurrences there is nothing to indicate that the word should be understood as referring to anyone other than heavenly messengers.

To understand *aggelos* in Revelation chapters two and three (also 1:20) as referring to earthly messengers, while understanding the same word throughout the remainder of the book as referring to heavenly messengers, is forced and unnatural. Consistency of interpretation would require one to acknowledge that angels are seen as being very

instrumental in God's dealings with mankind throughout this book, beginning in chapters one through three.

The Overcomers

The seven messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three are all identical in their basic structure. The opening verse of each message contains descriptive terminology, taken either word-for-word from the description of Christ given in chapter one or from material directly related to this description, *which has to do with "judgment."*

Following this, each message begins with the statement, "I know thy works..." Then, certain things are stated concerning each Church relative to past works, and each message concludes with an overcomer's promise.

Contextually, the "descriptive" aspects of Christ in chapters two and three *can ONLY* continue the thought of *judgment* from chapter one. The seven epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three provide additional information, forming commentary, *with judgment continuing as the CENTRAL issue at hand.*

"Works" are then brought into the picture in each epistle, for *it is WORKS* which will be reviewed when Christians are judged.

"Overcoming" and promised "blessings" then terminate each epistle, clearly revealing that *ONLY* the overcomers — those possessing works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones" — will be allowed to enter into the promised blessings.

There are seven different overcomer's promises in chapters two and three, and each promise *is millennial in its scope of fulfillment.*

That is, these promises will be realized during the 1,000-year reign of Christ after Christians have had their works tried "by ['in'] fire" at the judgment seat.

Christ is seen as Judge in the midst of the seven Churches in chapter one, and chapters two and three provide information concerning why and on what basis these seven Churches — representing Christianity as a whole — are to come under judgment.

The word “overcome” is a translation of the Greek word *nikao*, which means “to conquer” or “to gain a victory over.” The thought inherent in the word *nikao* (or *nike*, the noun form of the word) always means *to be victorious in a contest or conflict*.

The “overcomers” *are the conquerors, the victors*; they are the ones who will have successfully run the race of the faith; they are the ones who will have conquered the numerous encountered obstacles along the way; they are the ones who will inherit the promised blessings — “To him that overcometh...” — at the conclusion of the race.

Israel had previously forfeited this right and has been set aside during this time (Matt. 21:18-43). And, to occupy the position which Israel forfeited, God has called another people — a separate and distinct people — “for his name,” taken mainly from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14[*cf.* I Peter 2:9-12]).

Those presently being called comprise an entirely *new creation*, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, forming *one new man* “in Christ.”

And individual members of *this new man* have been exhorted to overcome and have been commissioned to bring forth fruit, with a view to their occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom.

The present dispensation is the time which God has set aside to deal with those comprising *this new man*, and judgment at the end of the dispensation will reveal every Christian’s response.

Some Christians will be shown to have overcome, possessing works comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones”; but other Christians will be shown to have been overcome, possessing works comparable to “wood, hay, stubble.”

The overcomers will, at that time, inherit the promised blessings of Revelation chapters two and three; but those shown to have been overcome will be denied these blessings.

THIS is the CENTRAL subject matter dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation.

Three Enemies

There are three great enemies in the Christian life which *MUST* be overcome.

These three enemies are:

- 1) *The World.*
- 2) *The Flesh.*
- 3) *The Devil.*

ALL temptations come to Christians in these three realms, *ANY ONE* of them can produce shipwreck in the lives of Christians, and *EACH* is overcome after a different fashion.

1) *The World*

According to I John 5:1-5, the “world” is overcome by *our faith*:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.”

The text deals with the saved, *NOT* with the unsaved. It deals with the saved faithfully keeping the commandments of God *through a bringing forth from above, and, in this manner, overcoming the world.*

The thought advanced by many Christians that “overcome” in this passage has to do with the simple salvation message, placing every Christian in the position of being an overcomer on the basis of his presently possessed eternal salvation, is completely foreign to that which is taught here or elsewhere in the New Testament.

In fact, such a teaching *is completely contrary to and does away with that which is dealt with in this passage.*

Overcoming *does NOT* even enter into the picture *UNTIL after one has been saved.* From a Biblical standpoint, there is *NO* such thing as unsaved individuals overcoming *the world* (or, for that matter, *the flesh, or the Devil*).

Overcoming has to do with spiritual verities, and *ONLY* those who have “passed from death unto life” — *ONLY* those who have been made alive spiritually, through the Spirit breathing life into the ones previously having no life — can function in the spiritual realm. In this respect, *Christians ALONE are in a position to overcome in the manner seen in these verses.*

Overcoming the world is the subject matter in I John 5:1-5, and there are four references in these five verses to being *brought forth from above* (three in v. 1 and one in v. 4). And, as well, there are six other references in I John to the same thing, a major subject of I John in relation to Christians and overcoming (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:18 [twice]).

The expression, brought forth from above (born from above), is *NOT* used in I John or elsewhere in Scripture relative to the unsaved (John 1:13; 3:3-7; James 1:18; I Peter 1:3, 23). The expression is *ALWAYS* used relative to the saved. Overcoming is in view, and the power to overcome is derived from above, *NOT* from below, from within the individual.

(This is *NOT* to say that the Divine work surrounding an unsaved individual believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and being saved is to be viewed in any manner other than a bringing forth from above, for there is *NO* other way that he could be saved. Rather, it is to say that Scripture *does NOT* use the expression in this manner. Scripture uses the expression *ONLY* one way — relative to a work of the Spirit among the saved.

For additional information on this subject, refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above.*)

Overcoming in verses four and five *MUST* be understood contextually. Note the connecting word, "For," beginning verse four. The first three verses of this chapter place the one who has been brought forth from above in the position of keeping God's commandments (the only way he can keep them — living in the sphere of the spiritual, not the fleshly).

Then, the person in verse four is one who, through faith (through believing God, inseparably associated with being brought forth from above), keeps these commandments; and, *in this manner* — through keeping God's commandments — he is presently overcoming the world.

The "world," referring to the present *world system* under the dominion and sway of the god of this age, Satan, is a major subject of I John.

Christians are commanded, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." The things in the world, under the control of Satan, are "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The world *does NOT* know the one True and Living God; *NOR* does the world know Christians. The entire world “lieth in wickedness [under the control of the wicked one]” (I John 2:15-18; 3:1; 5:19).

This is the status of the way things exist during “Man’s Day,” but a change is in the offing. The entire world system as we know it today is about to pass out of existence. A change in the entire administration is about to occur. And *UNTIL* that time arrives, Christians are to regulate their activities in accord with I John 5:1-5.

(Some of the same material on I John 5:1-5, containing additional information, can be found at the end of the preceding chapter in this book, Chapter VI, pp. 94-96.)

2) *The Flesh*

According to Rom. 8:13 and Col. 3:5, the flesh is overcome by *mortifying [by putting to death]* “the deeds of the body,” which emanate from the ever-present sin nature, and all things emanating from the sin nature are to be kept *in a constant state of mortification [a constant state of death]*:

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

The revealed way to mortify “the deeds of the body” is set forth in Rom. 8:13, 14: “...if ye through the Spirit... as many as are led by the Spirit of God...” This, as well, is what is involved in Gal. 5:16ff: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...”

There is a constant warfare in the life of every believer, brought about by the presence of both the man of flesh and the man of Spirit residing in the same body, with either man capable of gaining the ascendancy and proving victorious in the conflict.

Walking in the Spirit, being brought forth from above, will assure victory over the man of flesh; and in this manner the Christian will be mortifying “the deeds of the body,” overcoming the flesh.

On the other hand, *giving way to the flesh will quench the Spirit, assuring defeat in one’s life.* In this manner the Christian will be allowing “the deeds of the body” to live, resulting in his being overcome by the flesh.

The man of flesh with his deeds are seen in Scripture *ONLY one way — a ruined creation, under the sentence of death* (cf. Gen. 1:2-4; II Cor. 4:6; Rom. 7:24). And if man doesn’t put the things associated with the man of flesh to death during the present time, they will rise up and testify against him at a future time, with the Lord Himself being forced to take care of matters.

The sentence of death MUST and WILL be carried out — whether by man during the present time, or by the Lord during a time yet future.

The original and unchangeable pattern for restoration associated with a ruined creation has forever been established in the opening verses of Genesis.

The darkness “upon the face of the deep” in Gen. 1:2a had to do with darkness over a material creation which had come into a state of ruin.

And this darkness continued to exist even following the restoration of the ruined creation (vv. 3-5). God simply brought light into existence and left the darkness alone. He placed light alongside the darkness and divided between the two (cf. Isa. 45:7).

However, the day is coming when God will make “all things new.” And, at *THAT time, the present darkness seen in the opening chapter of Genesis will NO longer exist* (Rev. 21:5, 25).

Fallen man forms a subsequent ruined creation of God, and the restoration of this ruined creation *MUST be effected after the IDENTICAL order set forth in the ORIGINAL pattern (SET PERFECT in the beginning)*.

The parallel restoration for man, wherein *the light shines “out of darkness,”* occurs at the point of his salvation, the point of his believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The man of flesh, associated with the ruined creation (as the darkness in the Genesis account was associated with the ruin of the material creation), continues in existence.

As the darkness was retained in the restoration of the material creation, so the old nature is retained in the restoration of man; but as God brought light into existence and made a division between the light and the darkness in Genesis, He brings a new nature into existence and makes a division between the new and the old today.

Then, the day is coming when God will make “all things new”; and as the darkness in the first chapter of Genesis will *NO* longer exist, the old nature presently possessed by redeemed man will, likewise, *NO* longer exist (*cf.* Rom. 7:24; 8:23; I John 3:2).

“Darkness” in Scripture is associated *with the works of the flesh* (John 3:19; Rom. 13:12; I Cor. 4:5), and the roots of this association, as previously noted, are found in the opening verses of Genesis. Darkness appears in connection with the ruined creation in the type, and the old nature appears in connection with the ruined creation in the antitype.

NOTHING good is ever said about darkness in Scripture. *ONLY of the light* does God use the word “good” (Gen. 1:4).

And the same *MUST* hold true concerning the old and new natures possessed by man (*cf.* I John 1:6, 8).

Both darkness and the old nature are, so to speak, *under the sentence of death*; and this sentence *MUST* be carried out — *by man during the present time, OR by the Lord yet future.*

Thus, awaiting the coming day, when the Lord will complete matters relative to the carrying out of *this sentence of death*, redeemed man in his present state is *to reprove* “the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11); he is *to mortify* — *put to death* — “the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13).

And in THIS manner ALONE redeemed man is to overcome the flesh.

3) *The Devil*

According to James 4:7 and I Peter 5:9, the Devil is overcome by *resisting*:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

“Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (I Peter 5:8, 9).

Christians are to set themselves against, withstand, the Devil as *they stand firm “in the faith.”*

“The faith” is an expression in the New Testament peculiarly related *to the Word of the Kingdom* (e.g., Acts 6:7; 13:8; Rom. 1:5; I Cor. 16:13; Gal. 1:23; Col. 1:23; II Tim. 3:8; Jude 3).

Christians are in a contest/race “of the faith” (I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7). And it is while *standing firm in the faith, in this race, that Christians are to withstand, resist, Satan.*

Christians are to be “sober...vigilant”; and the reason given is “because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

The word “sober” is the translation of the Greek word, *nepho*, which means “to exercise self-control” or “to be well-balanced”; and the word “vigilant” is a translation of the Greek word, *gregoreo*, meaning “to watch,” or “to be awake,” as seen in I Thess. 5:6, 10.

Christians are to always be watchful and exercise a well-balanced judgment in the race of the faith, *for Satan stands ever ready to bring about defeat in their lives through his “wiles [crafty, deceitful ways]”* (Eph. 6:11).

WHY is Satan so intensely interested in bringing about defeat in the lives of Christians today?

WHY has Satan expended so much time and energy throughout almost two millenniums in efforts to bring Christianity into the apostate condition in which it presently finds itself?

WHAT is so special about Christianity, attracting Satan’s attention after this fashion?

The answer is very simple, but it is one which goes almost completely unrecognized within the confines of the lukewarm, apostate Laodicean Church of today.

To properly understand the present warfare between Satan and Christians, one must go back to the creation of man and understand certain things concerning the reason for man’s creation.

Adam was brought into existence to rule the earth, and Eve was removed from Adam’s body, through the process revealed in Gen. 2:21-23, to reign as consort queen with him (Gen. 1:26-28).

And the dominion to be exercised by Adam was the one which Satan held at that time (and continues to hold today).

Satan had previously been brought into existence to rule the earth. He was the “anointed cherub [messianic angel].” He held the chief position among a great host of angels who, along with him, ruled the earth under the one True and Living God, in a complete structural breakdown of powers and authorities (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14-16; Luke 4:5, 6; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9).

But the day came when Satan rebelled against the Lord and succeeded in leading one-third of the angels ruling with him at that time to follow him. Satan, acting completely on his own, sought *to elevate his throne (increase his delegated power and authority)* and “be like the most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14). Satan sought to become the ruler over other provinces, evidently all the provinces throughout the universe — the position held by God Himself — rather than continue ruling only the province over which he had originally been placed.

(Satan stepped outside of God’s established laws governing His universal kingdom.

Note Appendix I in this volume of the book, “Actions Under Established Laws.”)

As a result, Satan’s kingdom was reduced to a ruined state, but he himself retained his position as ruler of the kingdom. *And he would be allowed to retain this position UNTIL that day when his God-appointed successor appeared on the scene, ready to take the sceptre* (Gen. 1:2a, 26, 28; Ps. 110:1, 2).

(A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler, though disqualified to continue on the throne, hold the sceptre *UNTIL his God-appointed replacement was NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to take the sceptre.*

Note Saul and David typifying Satan and Christ in this respect [for material on this subject, refer to Appendix IV in this volume of the book].)

The stated reason that God created man is the reason Satan was so intensely interested in bringing about man's fall. Man had been created to occupy the position which Satan held (Gen. 1:26-28). The wrecked domain (the earth) had been restored, and the one created to rule in Satan's stead had been created from the very soil of the restored domain.

Satan's replacement was present, on a restored domain, though he had yet to take the sceptre.

Thus, following man's creation, the only hope which Satan possessed was to bring about man's disqualification through sin, as he himself had previously been disqualified through sin. Otherwise, man would ultimately take the sceptre, and Satan's reign would end.

And Satan, through successfully tempting the woman, accomplished his purpose, ultimately bringing about man's fall and disqualification to take the sceptre.

This allowed Satan to continue his reign, necessitating the appearance of the second Man, the last Adam at a later date (*cf.* I Cor. 15:45).

The second Man, the last Adam *NOT ONLY* had to be brought on the scene, *BUT* He had to meet Satan face-to-face in order to show that He was fully qualified to act in the realm for which man had originally been created.

THEN, the last Adam provided redemption for fallen man, with a view to man ultimately occupying the position for which he had originally been created.

Christ's virgin birth (He *MUST* be God as well as Man, for the triune God *ALONE* can act in the realm of redemption [Gen. 1-4]), His face-to-face encounter with Satan in the wilderness, and His death at Calvary, followed by his burial and resurrection, have *ALL* come to pass.

HOWEVER, He has *YET* to wrest the governmental reins of the earth from Satan's hands. He has *YET* to take the sceptre and rule the earth in Satan's stead.

An interval of time exists prior to His taking the kingdom in order that He, through the work of the Spirit, might call out a bride to reign as consort queen with Him.

THIS is the REASON for the present dispensation, a fact little recognized and understood in Christendom today.

As the first Adam possessed a bride removed from his body to reign with him (preceding the time he was to take the sceptre), so will the last Adam. This bride is presently being called out from among the redeemed, and for the past two millenniums, Satan has been doing all within his power to thwart God's purpose for the present dispensation.

His attack today is directed specifically and intently against Christians for ONE simple, revealed reason. Christians are the ones destined to be placed as consort queen with Christ in His reign.

Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God, and Satan cannot touch Him.

But Christians are presently upon the earth, and Satan walks "to and fro in the earth...up and down in it" (Job. 1:7; 2:2; cf. I Peter 5:8), venting his wrath against them, seeking at every turn to bring about their defeat and consequent disqualification to occupy a position with Christ during the coming day of His power.

Satan, at every turn, seeks to overcome Christians, rather than allowing Christians to overcome him.

In the coming kingdom, Christ will rule in Satan's stead, and Christians occupying positions with Christ will rule in the stead of the angels ruling with Satan (angels ruling during both past and present times).

The ENTIRE matter surrounding the present warfare between Satan and Christians has the coming KINGDOM in view.

Overcoming Christians will occupy the numerous proffered positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom, BUT the Christians who are overcome will be denied these positions.

Thus, future positions with Christ in the kingdom, presently being offered to Christians, are for the overcomers ALONE.

“There exists a government of the universe conducted by great angels and their subordinates. Many of these have fallen from their original allegiance to God and prostitute their offices and powers to corrupt His realms.

It is therefore inevitable that a rearrangement shall come in that heavenly government. This will be effected by Christ and His glorified followers being invested with the whole of that heavenly authority.

For it is written that ‘not unto the angels hath God subjected the inhabited world to come’” (Heb. 2:5).

— G. H. Lang
World Chaos, 1948

The Whole Armor of God

Eph. 6:10-18 is the passage in the Word of God which instructs Christians concerning how to be properly clothed in order to withstand the onslaughts of Satan and his demons today.

There is a battle presently being waged.

This battle is specifically said to *NOT* be “against flesh and blood [*NOT* against fallen man residing on the earth],” *BUT, instead,* “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 ISSUE at hand concerns a future governmental control over the earth from a heavenly realm as joint-heirs with the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

A battle of this nature requires *extensive preparation,* and *ONLY* those properly prepared can be victorious in the battle.

This is the reason given in Eph. 4:11ff for the placement of pastor-teachers in the Churches, and this is the reason given in Eph. 6:10ff for the battle-dress in which Christians are to be arrayed.

Christians entering into this conflict are to take unto themselves “the *WHOLE* armor of God.” *NOTHING* short of this will suffice, for Christians are able to withstand Satan’s attacks (are able to stand against the wiles of the Devil) *ONLY* in this manner.

Six items are listed for Christians to take in order to be properly clothed in the present conflict:

1) “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...” (v. 14a).

There is no definite article before “truth.” This is not “the truth,” which is *the Word of God*. That appears later (v. 17).

The girdle is placed about the loins first, and the other pieces of armor are affixed to the girdle. Placing the girdle about the loins is with a view to the other pieces of armor also being taken and put on; and for a Christian to put on the girdle of truth can only be synonymous with a Christian entering the conflict in a truthful or sincere and earnest manner, looking ahead to continuing the process of putting on the armor, ultimately resulting in his being clothed with the whole armor of God.

Arraying one’s self with the girdle has to do with a Caleb- and Joshua-type attitude toward the goal in view:

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

2) “...and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (v. 14b).

Note that this is something which the Christian himself is to put on.

This has nothing to do with the righteousness of Christ accounted to the Christian at the time of the birth from above.

Rather, the “breastplate of righteousness” has to do with *right living*. It has to do with the “righteous acts of the saints,” “righteous acts” which make up the wedding garment in Rev. 19:8 (*ref. ASV*).

3) “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (v. 15).

Note the emphasis in verses eleven, thirteen, and fourteen relative to *standing* as one goes forth to battle: “to stand” (v. 11), “withstand [*lit.*, ‘stand against’],” “to stand” (vv. 13, 14). One must have solid footing to stand upon. Both feet *MUST* be firmly planted, “shod with the preparation [‘readiness’] of the gospel of peace.”

There are two aspects to the gospel in Scripture. One appears in connection with “peace *with* God,” and the other appears in connection with “the peace *of* God.”

“Peace *with* God” comes about through justification by grace through faith, as seen in Eph. 2:8, 9: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace *with* God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

This peace results from one being placed upon the foundation, with the most sure, steadfast footing possible, *apart from which there can be NO conflict*.

However, distinctions between “peace *with* God” and “the peace *of* God” are *NOT* what is in view in Eph. 6:15, for availing oneself of the proper footwear (for both feet) is something which, contextually, occurs following salvation.

In a parallel passage to that which is in view, the latter part of Rom. 10:15 states:

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.”

The feet are seen as the vehicle of transportation for the messenger, as he goes about proclaiming good news concerning *peace*. Within the overall scope of the good news, as previously stated, there is a facet of the message having to do with “peace with God” (for the unsaved [Rom. 5:1]) and there is a facet of the message having to do with the “peace of God” (for the saved [Phil. 4:5-7]). The contextual emphasis in Rom. 10:15 though has to do with *the saved*, *NOT with the unsaved*.

Exactly the same thought is in view regarding the armor in Eph. 6:15. Having one’s feet properly shod has to do with proper preparation relative to the good news concerning *peace*, as it pertains to the saved, exactly as seen in Rom. 10:15; and this would be based on the person already having “peace with God,” as seen in Rom. 5:1.

The messenger’s feet being properly shod shows a proper preparation of the messenger as he goes about proclaiming this message concerning *peace*. And this message of *peace* would have two facets — *the peace of God* now (having to do with the present aspect of salvation, the outworking of the saving of the soul), culminating in a future *peace* when *the Prince of Peace* is Himself present (having to do with the future aspect of salvation, when the salvation of the soul will be realized).

4) “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [wicked one]” (v. 16).

“Faith” is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter*. The weakness of the average Christian is lack of faith, which results from the neglect of prayerful study and meditation on the Word of God (*cf.* Rom. 10:17).

Hebrews chapter eleven, the great chapter on *faith*, provides the capstone to the first ten chapters of the Book;

and the opening two verses of chapter twelve provide the capstone to all that is stated in chapter eleven.

In these verses, Christians are exhorted to “lay aside every weight [every hindrance in the spiritual warfare], and the sin which doth so easily beset us [lack of faith, the besetting sin common to every Christian (*ref. ch. 11*)].” And in *this manner ALONE* Christians are to “run with patience” the race set before them, “looking unto Jesus [*lit.*, ‘looking from, unto Jesus (*i.e.*, looking *from* all that surrounds, *unto* Jesus)]...”

5) “*And take the helmet of salvation...*” (v. 17a).

I Thessalonians 5:8 reveals that this helmet is the “hope of salvation.” This is the salvation to be revealed (salvation of the soul) at the time Christ returns.

The hope set before Christians is *the hope of occupying a position with Christ in His coming kingdom*.

There is *NO other doctrine* in the Word of God which will inspire and encourage a Christian more in the present conflict against Satan and his demons than the doctrine of “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:12, 13; *cf.* Col. 1:5, 27; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Heb. 3:6; 6:18).

(Note: “That blessed hope” in Titus 2:13 is *NOT*, as often taught, the rapture. The construction of the Greek text shows that His appearance in glory [an appearance *FOLLOWING* the Tribulation] is a further description and explanation of “that blessed hope.”

“That blessed hope” *has to do with the Christian’s hope and expectation of having a part in this glory.*)

6) “*...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (v. 17b).

Christ Himself, in the temptation account, demonstrated that *the ONE great weapon* to be used against Satan is the Word of God.

Satan also knew and attested to the power of this Word when he attempted to use it against Christ (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; cf. Heb. 4:12).

David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). It is vitally important, it is imperative, *that Christians KNOW and UNDERSTAND the POWER of the WORD of God and KNOW HOW to USE THIS WORD in the present conflict.*

Having properly clothed and armed themselves, Christians are to then be:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (v. 18).

Overcoming is a lifelong task, provision has been made, and proffered rewards await the victors.

In the words of Paul, as he was borne along by the Holy Spirit:

"So run, that ye may obtain" (I Cor. 9:24b).

8

The Tree of Life

Wisdom and Knowledge to Rule and Reign

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden...” (Gen. 2:9a).

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

The promise concerning those who overcome being granted the privilege of partaking of the tree of life is the first of “seven” overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three. These promises pertain *to Christians ALONE*, and the realization of these promises awaits *the future Messianic Era*.

The time when Christians will enter into the blessings associated with these promises *MUST* follow the time set forth in chapter one — Christ appearing as Judge in the midst of the “seven” Churches.

Judgment *MUST* occur *FIRST*. *THEN*, overcoming Christians will realize that which has been promised.

The Seven Epistles

Overcoming in each of the “seven” promises is related to existing conditions in the particular Church to which the promise is given. One promise though *is NOT* to be looked upon as standing alone and being peculiar to *ONLY one Church*.

There are seven promises given to seven Churches. "Seven" is a number showing the completeness of that which is in view.

In this particular instance, the "seven" Churches show the COMPLETE Church, ALL Christians; and the "seven" overcomer's promises show the COMPLETENESS of that which has been provided, yet future, for ALL Christians.

BUT, though these promises have been provided for ALL Christians, they will be realized ONLY by overcoming Christians.

The seven Churches viewed together, as seen in these chapters, comprise an indivisible unit; and the seven overcomer's promises viewed together, as presented in connection with Christians comprising these seven Churches, are indivisibly related in such a manner that one CANNOT be realized apart from the other.

And viewing the overcomer's promises in this manner, that seen throughout each epistle would have to be looked upon the same way.

Different facets of truth, applicable to ALL Christians throughout the seven Churches, are shown through the Lord's comments on things which have been singled out in each epistle concerning a particular Church.

1) Applicable to All

Viewing one facet of truth after this fashion, in the epistle to "the church of ['in']Ephesus," reference is made to a departure from "thy first love" (v. 4). The command is then given, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

This is followed by the warning that if remembrance, repentance, and first works do NOT follow, the "candlestick [Church in Ephesus; cf. 1:11-13, 20]" will be removed from its place. And this removal of the candlestick — this removal of the Church in Ephesus, the Christians in Ephesus — is, contextually, millennial in its scope of fulfillment.

This removal will occur at the judgment seat; *and it has NOTHING to do with eternal verities, with one's eternal salvation, etc.*

NOR do the warnings in the other epistles in Revelation chapters two and three. Rather, *millennial verities ALONE, as they relate to saved individuals*, are in view through that stated in these warnings.

The time element involved in the warnings would have to be the same as that seen in the overcomer's promises, for the latter has to do with overcoming or being overcome relative to the former.

And *millennial verities ALONE* are clearly revealed to be in view through that stated in several of the overcomer's promises. Conditions seen in several of these promises will not exist beyond the Millennium, during the unending cycle of ages having to do with the new heaven and the new earth (e.g., 2:11, 26, 27; 3:5, 21).

(Refer to Appendix V in this volume of the book, "The Mandate Given to Adam," for further information regarding the time element involved in the overcomer promises in Rev. 2, 3 being millennial alone.)

Following the warning to the Church in Ephesus concerning a removal of the candlestick from its place, reference is made to the "Nicolaitanes" (an Anglicized form of the compound Greek word, *nikolaites* [from *nike*, "a victor," "a conqueror"; and *laos*, "people"]). Thus, the word "Nicolaitanes" means, "to conquer [be victorious over] the people."

Within Church history, there is no record of a group of individuals known by the name, "Nicolaitanes" — in the Church in Ephesus, or in any other first-century Church (note that a reference to the "Nicolaitanes" is also repeated in the epistle to the Church in Pergamos [2:15]).

And, when coming across a reference of this nature, there is *ONLY* one thing that can be done in order to understand that which the Lord meant through using this word (whether by Christians during the first century, or by Christians today). The use of “Nicolaitanes” would have to be understood as a reference to *the actions of a group of individuals, described by the meaning of the word itself.*

From the meaning of the word, contextually, a reference to the “Nicolaitanes” could only be understood as a reference to *individuals forming a hierarchy within the Church, ruling over the people.*

And these individuals were undoubtedly responsible, at least in part, for the existing conditions in Ephesus near the end of the first century, as well as the conditions subsequently seen existing in Pergamos (and possibly in one or more of the other five Churches, though this is not mentioned).

And the entire matter leads into the promise for those who overcome, *i.e.*, for those who *remember, repent, and do the first works.* *THESE* are the ones who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life during the Messianic Era (vv. 5-7).

ALL of these things, though directed to those in the Church in Ephesus, would be applicable to those in any of the other six Churches as well.

And the inverse of that would be equally true. The things written to those in each of the other six Churches would be applicable to those in the Church in Ephesus, or to those in any of the Churches.

That is, the things recorded in each of these seven epistles would be applicable to Christians everywhere.

2) *The Dispensation*

It is also evident that these seven epistles, through the manner in which they have been Divinely arranged and

structured, set forth truths within another realm. Viewed together, beginning with the Church in Ephesus and ending with the Church in Laodicea, it is evident that these epistles set forth a Divinely revealed, overall view of Church history, covering the entire dispensation.

In this respect, the message to the Church in Ephesus would reveal things concerning the Church at the beginning of the dispensation; the messages to the next five Churches would continue from that point and reveal things concerning the Church throughout at least most of the remainder of the dispensation; and the message to the Church in Laodicea would reveal things concerning the Church during the closing years of the dispensation.

(Revelation chapters two and three present one of only two places in Scripture where an overall history of Christendom throughout the dispensation is given. The other was also given by Christ, but years earlier during His earthly ministry, preceding Calvary.

The earlier history of Christendom can be seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen [*ref. the author's book, Till the Whole Was Leavened*]. And interestingly enough, *BOTH of these accounts* center around a history of Christendom as it pertains to *the Word of the Kingdom* — something which Church history books written by man *NEVER even mention, much less center around.*

And *UNTIL* man understands *the TRUE nature* of Church history, from the standpoint revealed in Matthew chapter thirteen and Revelation chapters two and three, *he can NEVER properly understand Church history.* He *can NEVER* properly understand why the Church, after almost 2,000 years of existence, has ended up in its present decadent state.

And, as a result, he can do little more than what is presently being done — approach the whole matter from a position other than how it is handled in Scripture.)

Near the beginning of the Church's existence on earth, as shown by the first of the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three, there was a departure of Christians from their first love. And this revealed something with far-reaching ramifications which would occur in Christendom during the early years of its existence. The time element is not given in the epistle, but it would have to be seen in conjunction with a general deterioration of spiritual conditions in Christendom, occurring over the first several centuries.

Christians during the early years of the Church were busily engaged in the Lord's work as they waited, anticipated, and longed for His return. They *loved His appearing* (cf. II Tim. 4:8).

But as time went on and the Lord remained in heaven, the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 began to do its damaging work, resulting in Christians gradually losing their first love. And the end result of the loss of this first love was the onset of what is known in Church history as "The Dark Ages."

Although Christians departing from their first love emanates out of a sequence of events which fit into a framework of early Church history, this is not something peculiar to that period. Rather, this is something which has continued to exist since that time; and the attendant warning to Christians concerning the possibility of the candlestick being removed *MUST* extend throughout the entire period.

The retention or removal of the candlestick *is contingent on either overcoming or being overcome relative to the matter at hand* (v. 7). Eternal verities *are NOT in view at all*. The thought set forth in this passage projects the matter out into that time when Christ will deal with the Church in *judgment*, and a retention or removal of the candlestick anticipates the Church as it will appear *following* the issues of the judgment seat of Christ.

3) *Called, Called Out*

The word *Church* in the Greek text is a compound word (*ekklesia*, from *ek* and *kaleo*) which means “called out.” And the word is used in the New Testament in two senses:

1) As the Church appears *preceding the issues of the judgment seat* (which would be during the present dispensation [Rev. 2, 3], or as the Church is seen *before the judgment seat* [Rev. 1b-3]).

2) As the Church will appear *following the issues of the judgment seat* (which would be as the Church is seen in Rev. 19:7-9, as the bride of Christ [*cf.* Heb. 12:23]).

Only the “called” (all of the saved) can comprise the Church today (as it is looked upon in Rev. 2, 3), for the “called out” are yet to be revealed and removed from the called.

The Church will appear in the true sense of the word itself (*ekklesia*, “called out”) only after the “called out” have been removed from the “called,” which will occur following Christ dealing with all Christians at His judgment seat (note that all those being addressed in Rev. 2:1-7 are in the Church [as the Church presently appears], but some are in danger of being removed [as the Church will one day appear]).

Christ’s warning concerning the removal of the candlestick in Rev. 2:5 — the removal of the Church in Ephesus, the Christians in Ephesus — *MUST* be understood in the light of the two ways in which the word “Church” is used in Scripture.

The message is to individuals in the Church *as it appears today, which comprises ALL of the called, ALL of the saved, NOT just the called out* (for the Church in the latter sense is yet to be revealed).

And any of the called who leave their “first love” and do not “repent, and do the first works,” *CANNOT be among the called out*. They *CANNOT* comprise the Church as it will appear in that coming day.

Rather, they will *be removed*, spoken of elsewhere as *being disapproved* (Gk., *adokimos*“ [cf. I Cor. 9:27; II Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:16; Heb. 6:8]).

These two appearances of the Church present a sharp contrast in Scripture:

The Church on earth immediately *preceding* its removal to appear before the judgment seat is described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (which includes only those Christians alive at that time [Rev. 3:14-18]).

But the Church *following* the issues of the judgment seat is described as the “glorious church [the Church in her glory (the bride of Christ)], not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (which will include overcoming Christians from throughout the dispensation [Eph. 5:25-32]). And it is the Church in her glory, the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9), which will be extended the privilege of partaking of “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

The Church as it will exist in that coming day is referred to in Heb. 12:23 as the “Church of the firstborn.” The thought has to do with *a called out group of firstborn sons*.

This moves matters beyond the adoption (the placement of firstborn sons) and presents the Church as being comprised only of individuals *called out of the body*, not individuals called out of the world (so to speak), as the Church is seen during the present day and time.

(Paul, in his Church epistles, though he wrote to all of the saved in a particular locality, *often worded matters more in keeping with the thought of the Church as it will appear in that coming day* [as presented by the writer of Hebrews in Heb. 12:23; e.g., Rom. 1:7, 8; Eph. 1:5-14; I Thess. 1:5-10; 5:1-9].

And this would be in complete keeping with Paul's central message [pertaining to *the mystery*], which was *the central message* proclaimed throughout Christendom during the first century.)

The Church as it will exist in that coming day will appear in complete keeping with the type in Genesis chapter two — Eve formed from *a part of Adam's body*, which had been removed from his body.

The bride of Christ, in the antitype — synonymous with the Church as it will appear in that coming day — will be formed from *a part of Christ's body*, which will have been removed from His body.

ALL Christians together form the body of Christ. *BUT, ALL* Christians *CANNOT* form the bride of Christ.

ONLY those removed from the body can form the bride.

The type has been set, and the antitype *MUST* follow the type in *EXACT* detail. There can be *NO* variance between the two.

And the called out, in that day, forming *the bride*, will be placed as *firstborn sons* (*i.e.*, be adopted), with a view to their occupying positions with Christ in the kingdom.

(For a more detailed discussion concerning the bride being removed from the body, refer to the author's book, *The Bride in Genesis*, Chapter I, "Adam and Eve.")

Note that the Church will be looked upon in that coming day in two respects in Scripture — as *a bride*, and as *a firstborn son*. These are simply two ways in which Scripture presents the matter.

On the one hand, *Christ MUST have a bride to reign as consort queen with Him*; then, on the other hand, *ONLY firstborn sons can rule*.

NONE of this is true in the angelic realm, *ONLY* in the human realm. Angelic rulers are *ALL sons, but NOT*

firstborn sons; and there can be *NO* thought of marriage within the angelic realm itself, for all angels are of the same gender, referred to in a masculine respect.)

In Genesis, Proverbs, and Revelation

“The tree of life” is mentioned nine times in Scripture, in three different books — three times in Genesis (2:9; 3:22, 24), four times in Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), and twice in the Book of Revelation (2:7; 22:2).

BUT, what was the original PURPOSE for the tree of life (seen in Genesis), which will be REALIZED yet future (seen in the Book of Revelation)?

The tree of life was one of the numerous trees in the garden in Eden. And Adam, with Eve, was commanded to eat of all these trees, with the exception of one — “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:9, 16, 17).

Adam, the first man, had been created for the specific purpose of assuming *the rulership over the earth*, and the fruit of the tree of life was singled out as *a specific provision* for man as he exercised this rule.

An evident connection between man’s rule and his partaking of the tree of life can be seen by noting *the appearance of this tree* in the beginning when man *WAS in a position to rule*, *the absence of this tree* during the entire period when man *IS NOT in a position to rule* (aside from the tree being referenced in Proverbs), and *the reappearance of this tree* in the Book of Revelation when man *WILL be brought back into a position to rule* (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; Rev. 2:26,27).

The period during which man has been barred from eating of the tree of life *began* following Adam’s fall, resulting in his disqualification to rule; and this period will *end* following the issues of the judgment seat, at which time man will once again find himself in a position to rule.

Adam, following the fall, was driven from the garden to prevent his partaking of the tree of life. Adam *could NOT* be permitted to eat of this tree in a fallen condition, for had this occurred, Adam, in a fallen state, would have realized that which fruit from this tree was meant to provide.

Thus, *NOT ONLY* did God remove Adam from the garden, *BUT* “Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way,” were placed at “the east of the garden...*to keep the way of the tree of life [to prevent fallen man from reentering the garden and partaking of this tree]*” (Gen. 3:22-24).

Studying Gen. 3:22-24 apart from the context and related Scripture could lead one to believe that the purpose for the tree of life in the beginning, in Genesis, was to provide perpetuity of life for Adam in his unfallen state.

However, such *could NOT* have been the case at all. “Death” *did NOT* enter into the picture until *after* Adam’s sin (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6ff; cf. Rom. 6:23), at which time he was barred from the tree of life.

Adam had lived *in an undying state* prior to his sin, as he continued to live *in an antithetical dying state* following his sin.

And to say that the tree of life was given to Adam in his unfallen state to provide perpetuity of life, preventing death, *CANNOT possibly be correct*.

NOR could it possibly be correct to say that the tree of life would have had anything to do with providing *physical life (keeping Adam alive physically)* following the fall.

A tree can produce *ONLY* “after his kind” (Gen. 1:11, 12).

In this respect, *fruit* from the tree of life simply *could NOT have produced one result before man’s fall and another following man’s fall*.

In Rev. 2:7, partaking of the tree of life has been promised to the overcomers from among those *ALREADY possessing eternal life*.

Consequently, in this passage, the tree of life *can have NOTHING whatsoever to do with perpetuity of life; and EXACTLY the same thing could ONLY be seen in the Genesis account when man was first brought upon the scene.*

The tree of life in both Genesis chapters two and three and Revelation chapter two appears *in the SAME setting.*

The tree of life reserved for Christians in Rev. 2:7 is associated peculiarly with *a provision for those who will rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ.*

And viewing Adam's position in the Genesis account — created *to rule and reign*, in possession of an unending life, with the fruit of the tree of life at his disposal — *the SAME thought concerning regality in connection with the tree of life could ONLY hold true.*

Thus, Adam, in a fallen state, NO longer in a position to rule, could NOT have been allowed to eat of the tree of life, for fruit from this tree would have provided "life" in relation to REGALITY.

This whole overall thought concerning the tree of life in Scripture *would have to hold true*, for that seen relative to this tree *in Revelation chapter two* is drawn from that which was *first* seen relative to this tree *in Genesis chapters two and three.*

The fruit of the tree of life *was in the past* (seen in the Book of Genesis) and *will be in the future* (seen in the Book of Revelation) *a provision for the rulers in the kingdom. This is an evident fact which MUST be recognized.*

And, in that coming day following the Millennium, the tree of life will be for "the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2).

The Greek word translated "healing" is *therapeia*, from which the English word "therapy" is derived.

This is a medical term which has to do with *restorative healing*. In that day, God will *restore ALL of saved mankind to the original place which man occupied at the time of his creation.* And, consequently, *the whole of saved mankind, with regality in view, will have access to the tree of life.*

During the preceding Messianic Era, the tree of life will have been made available to overcoming Christians (Rev. 2:7), those ruling and reigning as co-heirs with Christ. And this tree could very well be made available to certain others at this time as well, others occupying regal positions with Christ in His reign from the heavens over the earth (*e.g.*, certain Old Testament saints, Tribulation martyrs [Matt. 8:11, 12; Rev. 20:4-6]).

But following the Messianic Era, in the eternal ages, this tree is seen being made available to the nations of the earth, something which would have been completely out of place during the Millennium. And this will be an apparent end result of Israel's evangelistic endeavors during the Millennium, along with Christ and His co-heirs' rule with a rod of iron during this time.

Man was created in the beginning *to rule and to reign*. And though only a part of saved mankind will have been brought back into a position to occupy the throne at the beginning of the Millennium (with the tree of life made available to them at this time), at the end of the Millennium the whole of saved mankind will be brought back into this position (with the tree of life made available to them at this time).

1) *Wisdom, Understanding*

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is *a tree of life* to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retaineth her" (Prov. 3:13-18).

Following the introduction to "the tree of life" in the opening chapters of Genesis, there are only *four references* to this tree throughout Scripture until one arrives at Rev. 2:7.

Solomon used the expression, "a tree of life," four times in the Book of Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4); and it is within this revelation given through Solomon that one finds *information pertaining to the type "provision" — past and future — which fruit from this tree would provide.*

And through putting all of this together, the reason then becomes apparent *WHY this tree, with its fruit, was among the trees provided for Adam and Eve to eat in their unfallen state, and WHY fruit from this tree is being reserved for overcoming Christians to partake of during the Messianic Era.*

Then, as previously seen, *there is also a connection between this tree and the complete restoration of the nations of the earth beyond the Messianic Era, with ALL of mankind realizing the purpose for man's creation in the beginning (Rev. 22:20).*

In the first of the four passages from Proverbs dealing with the tree of life, *wisdom and understanding* are said to be "a tree of life."

Viewing this in the light of the wisdom and understanding possessed by Solomon as he ruled over Israel is the association provided by Scripture to correctly understand *one facet* of the tree of life. *Solomon possessed wisdom and understanding as he ruled; and Christians MUST, in like manner, possess wisdom and understanding as they rule, as would have been necessary for Adam had he ruled.*

a) *Solomon Properly Equipped*

Shortly after Solomon ascended the throne following the death of David, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon, recognizing that

he was but as a “little child” in understanding the affairs of state within the kingdom over which he ruled asked for *wisdom* and *knowledge*. Solomon asked God for the ability to judge the people of Israel in equity, justice, and righteousness.

Such a request pleased the Lord, and Solomon was granted not only “*wisdom* and *knowledge*” but also “*riches*, and *wealth*, and *honor*.” His ability to rule, his material wealth, and the respect which he commanded — all coming from the hand of the Lord — would later be shown to exceed that of any king on the face of the earth (I Kings 3:5-15; II Chron. 1:7-17).

Solomon’s ability to judge among his people in a unique manner through the wisdom and knowledge which the Lord had bestowed began to be displayed through a decision which he rendered concerning two women and a child.

These two women dwelled alone in the same house, and both had given birth to sons, one three days before the other. The son born last died one night because his mother lay upon him; and as the other mother slept with her son at her side, the mother of the dead child took the living child from his mother’s side and placed the dead child in its stead.

However, upon awakening, the mother now in possession of the dead child realized that the child was not hers and found that her child was still alive and being claimed by the other mother.

And not being able to resolve the matter between themselves, their case was brought before Solomon.

Solomon was told what had allegedly occurred; and as he listened to both women claiming the living child, he was unable to ascertain which was the true mother.

He then called for a sword and commanded that the child be divided into two parts, giving half to each woman. Solomon, in his wisdom, knew that the true mother would be revealed through the actions which each woman would take when they heard his decision.

And this is exactly what occurred. The true mother pleaded for the child's life, telling Solomon to not harm the child but to give him to the other woman. The other woman, whose child had died, on the other hand, insisted that the child be divided.

Solomon then knew which of the two was telling the truth, and the child was returned to his true mother (I Kings 3:16-27).

Solomon's *wisdom* in this matter spread throughout all Israel, and the people "feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment." Not only did God give Solomon wisdom to judge in all matters, but Solomon possessed wisdom of such a nature that it spread throughout the entire known world.

His wisdom "excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men...and his fame was in all nations round about...and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (I Kings 3:28; 4:29-34).

The queen of Sheba came "to prove him with hard questions" (I Kings 10:1ff), and in the end stated:

"It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (I Kings 10:6b, 7).

b) *Christians Properly Equipped*

The wisdom and understanding which Solomon possessed as he ruled in the kingdom of Israel (associated with "a tree of life") provides the central reason why the tree of life is found in association with Adam's rule in Genesis and with the Christians' rule yet future.

The fruit of this tree *would have provided* (for Adam) and *will provide* (for Christians) the necessary wisdom and understanding to govern in equity, justice, and righteousness.

God's bestowal of *wisdom, understanding, riches, wealth, and honor* upon Solomon typifies that which He will bestow upon overcoming Christians during the coming age.

Through the fruit of the tree of life, God will provide the necessary *wisdom and understanding to rule in the kingdom; through being co-heirs with God's Son*, Christians will come into possession of *unlimited riches and wealth, for ALL the Father's possessions will belong to the Son*; and in these positions, Christians will realize *a status of honor and glory befitting those elevated to such noble rank* (Gen. 24:10, 36, 53; John 16:13-15; I Peter 1:9-11; 4:12, 13; Rev. 4:11; 5:12).

The tree of life in Eden was a literal tree with literal fruit, as will be the tree of life in the new Jerusalem following the Millennium (Rev. 22:2).

However, there is a possibility that the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, reserved for Christians during the Millennium, may not be a literal tree as such. There is a sense in which Christ Himself is the Tree of Life, a Tree upon which Christians will one day feed, similar to the feeding upon Christ seen in John 6:48-56.

But, a feeding upon Christ in relation to the tree of life *could ONLY be at a future time ALONE*. Scripture associates a present feeding in this respect with "manna," not with a "tree."

The tree of life is located *in the paradise of God* and is connected *with REGALITY*, something from which Christians are presently *estranged*.

THIS is NOT the day when Christians are to rule and reign. THAT day lies in the future. Thus, any feeding upon Christ today *could NOT* be associated with the tree of life. Rather, it would have to be associated with manna.

(As previously seen, in Gen. 1:12, God introduced something concerning trees which *is unchangeable*. Trees which yield fruit *will ALWAYS yield their fruit "after his kind."*

The tree of life is located *in the PARADISE of God and associated with REGALITY; and fruit born by this tree MUST be viewed accordingly.*

The tree will bear fruit "after his kind," *associated with the PARADISE of God and with REGALITY; and this fruit can be eaten by man ONLY after he finds himself exercising REGALITY in the PARADISE of God, during the MESSIANIC ERA.)*

Insofar as a feeding upon manna with respect to Christ, note the third overcomer's promise (Rev. 2:17). The Israelites fed upon literal manna in the wilderness, but Christ is the Manna upon which Christians feed. Christ is "the bread of life"; and we "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood."

Through this process, we acquire *that wisdom which comes from above; or, as Scripture states, "Christ...is made ['has become'] unto us wisdom..."* (John 6:48-58; I Cor. 1:30; *cf.* I Cor. 2:6-10; Eph. 1:8; Col. 1:9, 28).

Christ is the Living Word which came down from heaven; and feeding upon the Living Word is accomplished through feeding upon the inseparable Written Word. In Christ are "hid all the treasures *of wisdom and knowledge*" (Col. 2:3); and feeding upon Him, through the Written Word, allows us to develop and grow, becoming more and more like Him through acquiring this wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and knowledge acquired during the present time though *is NOT for the purpose of equipping Christians to rule and reign*. We are living during the time Christ is in heaven, with the present existing kingdom under the dominion and control of Satan. Wisdom and knowledge presently being acquired is for *the SOLE purpose of equipping Christians to carry on the Lord's business during His time of absence.*

Wisdom and knowledge of a nature which will equip Christians to rule and reign will be acquired *ONLY* from the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. *IF* this is a reference to Christ Himself, such a feeding upon Christ *can ONLY refer to something which is NOT available today but reserved for the overcomers during the coming age.*

Christians allowed to partake of the tree of life in that day will, through partaking of this tree, be properly equipped for carrying on the Lord's business following His return when He is revealed as "King of kings, and Lord of lords"; and Christians carrying on His business then will do so through reigning as co-heirs with Him.

John, in two of the books which he wrote — the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation — deals with the entire matter of saved individuals partaking of manna during the present time and partaking of both the tree of life and hidden manna yet future.

Six of the eight times that John deals with man partaking after the preceding fashions have to do with man partaking of manna during the present time, during man's 6,000-year day.

And the seventh and eighth times have to do with man partaking of the tree of life and hidden manna during a future time, during the Lord's 1,000-year day, during the Messianic Era.

(For more information on "the hidden manna," refer to Chapter X in this first volume of the book.)

The six partakings occurring during man's 6,000-year day are seen in John's gospel:

1) *Life* — spiritual life, a passing "from death unto life" — derived through the One Who said "I am the resurrection, and the life (John 1:4; 10:10; 11:25).

2) *Food* — the "bread of life" (John 6:35).

3) *Water* — the “living water” (John 4:14; 7:37).

4) *Breath* — a continued breathing beyond the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life at the beginning (John 20:22).

5) *Light* — the “light of life” (John 8:12).

6) *Dwelling Place* — abiding “in the vine” (John 15:1-5).

But the Lord’s 1,000-year day will follow Man’s Day; and John dealt with man eating during this day through reference to both *the tree of life* and *hidden manna*, providing a seventh and an eighth partaking of Christ within that which he later wrote, recorded in the Book of Revelation:

7) *The Tree of Life* — related to *regality* and a *future inheritance in Christ’s kingdom* (Rev. 2:7).

8) *The Hidden Manna* — also related to *regality* and a *future inheritance in Christ’s kingdom* (Rev. 2:17).

Then, as previously seen, a reference to *the tree of life* in association with the ages beyond the Messianic Era is also seen at the end of this same book (Rev. 22:2).

2) *Fruit of the Righteous*

“The fruit of the righteous is a *tree of life*; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30).

The second mention of the “tree of life” in the Book of Proverbs is in connection with *righteousness* and *soul-winning*.

This is the identical connection one will find in the New Testament when studying the Christians’ association with the tree of life.

The “righteous” in Prov. 11:30 are the ones who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life. With respect to Christians, such a righteousness *CANNOT* be looked upon

as synonymous with the God-accounted righteousness of Christ received at the time an individual was saved, for every Christian possesses this righteousness.

But, as is plainly revealed in Rev. 2:7, *NOT* every Christian will be allowed to partake of the tree of life. The righteousness in this verse *can ONLY* have to do with “the righteous acts of the saints,” which form the wedding garment.

The ones referenced are those Christians who will be properly clothed at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9, ASV). These are the Christians who will comprise *the Church consisting of firstborn sons* (Heb. 12:23) and subsequently enter into the kingdom in positions of power and authority with Christ (Matt. 24:45-47; cf. vv. 48-51).

Soul-winning in the New Testament is largely misunderstood in Christian circles today. The common terminology, which is *NOT* correct at all, is to equate soul-winning with carrying the message of salvation by grace through faith to the unsaved.

BUT, equating soul-winning with the message of salvation by grace through faith serves *ONLY* to obscure both issues, leaving one hopelessly mired in a sea of misinterpretation.

Soul-winning is one thing, and proclaiming the message of salvation by grace through faith is another. The former has to do with the saved, and the latter has to do with the unsaved.

The messages involved in both issues *MUST be kept separate and distinct*, which necessitates Christians understanding proper distinctions in these two realms.

Salvation by grace through faith, carried to the unsaved, is the presentation of the simple gospel message. The unsaved are to be told “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 2:1, 2; 15:3).

Christ has PAID the penalty for sin. The WORK of redemption has been accomplished on man’s behalf, and God is SATISFIED.

Provision has been made for unredeemed man to be saved through receiving that which Christ has done on his behalf. And he does this through simply *believing on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 16:31).

Redeemed man, on the other hand, is to hear an entirely different message.

He is to be told the PURPOSE for his salvation.

He is to be told that Christ has gone away "to receive for himself a kingdom."

He is to be told that during the time of his Lord's absence he is to be busy with the talents and pounds which the Lord delivered to and left in charge of His servants (Christians).

He is to be told that a day of reckoning is coming.

He is to be told that the Lord will return to judge His servants on the basis of their faithfulness in carrying out His business during His time of absence.

And he is to be told that the outcome of this judgment will determine every Christian's position in the coming kingdom (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

And it is within this overall message to the saved that one finds the salvation of the soul taught in Scripture, *NOT* within the message of salvation by grace through faith, proclaimed to the unsaved.

"Soul-winning" has to do with winning those who are already saved to a life of faithfulness to the Lord.

"Soul-winning" is winning one's life.

"Soul-winning" involves winning Christians (those possessing "life") to be occupied with the Lord's business during His time of absence, anticipating His return.

And more specifically, *"soul-winning" involves winning Christians to be occupied in this manner with that portion of the Lord's business delivered to them personally.*

Illustrated in the parables of the talents and the pounds, one servant was responsible *ONLY* for bringing forth an increase in the talents or the pounds *which had been placed in his possession, NOT in those which had been placed in another servant's possession.*

Issues and determinations resulting from the judgment seat will be based strictly *on the evaluation of works performed by Christians in complete keeping with that set forth in these two parables.*

Direct references to the salvation of the soul are found in New Testament passages such as Matt. 16:24-27; Heb. 10:38, 39; James 1:21; 5:19, 20; I Peter 1:9-11 and are always spoken of in a future sense within a context dealing with those who are already saved.

Soul-winning is associated *with the righteous acts of the saints, with overcoming, and with one day being extended the privilege of partaking of the tree of life.* This is the reason that soul-winning is found within a context of this nature in Prov. 11:30.

The wise are the ones who win souls (win lives):

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

3) *Hope Realized*

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” (Prov. 13:12).

The third mention of the “tree of life” in the Book of Proverbs is in connection *with hope that is realized.*

There is *NO* tree of life as long as one's hope is deferred. *ONLY* when “the desire cometh [hope is realized]” does the tree of life come into view.

This thought from the Book of Proverbs is in perfect accord with the Christians' present hope in the light of the two previous references to the tree of life in this book.

Christians have been "begotten" from above unto a "living hope" through the "resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Christ lives, and Christians will live with Him. But this fact is not the object of one's hope. Hope is described as "living" because of resurrection, but hope itself lies in things beyond resurrection. These things are revealed as an "inheritance" and a "salvation" (I Peter 1:3-5).

"Hope," "inheritance," and "salvation" are inseparably linked in Scripture. It is *ONLY* because we are saved (passive, salvation of the spirit) that we can possess a "hope." And the hope which Christians possess looks ahead to the reception of an inheritance within a salvation (future, salvation of the soul) to be revealed.

The "blessed hope" in Titus 2:13 is one of the more familiar passages written to Christians in this respect.

This hope is often said to be the return of Christ for His Church, but that's *NOT* what this or any other passage in the New Testament dealing with the Christians' hope teaches at all. *Hope*, as in Titus 2:13, is associated with the "appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (ASV).

The construction of the Greek text in Titus 2:13 actually *makes hope synonymous with the appearing of Christ's glory.*

Christians are the ones who possess this hope, as they are the ones who will be partakers of Christ's glory when it is revealed. In this respect, participation in the coming glory of Christ will be the realization of one's present hope, *for one CANNOT be separated from the other.*

Christians realizing their present hope, and the overcomers in Rev. 2:7 who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life, are one and the same.

This is the reason Prov. 13:12 teaches *that hope realized is “a tree of life.”* Those Christians one day coming into a realization of their present hope will be the ones who constitute the rulers in the kingdom, the ones allowed to partake of the tree of life to equip them for service in their respective capacities in the kingdom.

4) A Wholesome Tongue

“A wholesome [‘tranquil’] tongue *is a tree of life*: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit” (Prov. 15:4).

The Epistle of James in the New Testament forms the commentary for the fourth and last mention of the “tree of life” in the Book of Proverbs, demonstrating *a number of things about the use of the tongue and showing the connection between Prov. 15:4 and the three previous references to the tree of life in this book.*

James is an epistle dealing strictly with the salvation of the soul, providing certain indispensable information necessary for a proper understanding of this all-important subject.

The tree of life, on the other hand, is reserved for those Christians realizing the salvation of their souls; and a proper understanding of the tree of life is integrally related to a proper understanding of this salvation.

James mentions the tongue in chapter one (vv. 26, 27) and then goes into a lengthy discourse in chapter three concerning this small member of the body and what it is capable of doing (vv. 1ff):

“The tongue...boasteth great things...is a fire, a world of iniquity...it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [*Gehenna*]...the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (3:5-8).

A Christian's spirituality can be seen through the control of his tongue, for the tongue can be properly controlled only through the use of that *wisdom and knowledge* which comes from above (James 3:1ff).

This thought from the Epistle of James takes one back to Prov. 3:13-18, *where wisdom and knowledge are associated with the tree of life*. And, in this same respect, "a wholesome tongue" also finds its association *with the tree of life*. A wholesome (tranquil) tongue results *from the proper use of Divinely imparted wisdom and knowledge*.

Concluding Thoughts:

Man's rule over the earth *MUST* await that time when Rev. 2:7 will be brought to pass. He that "overcometh" will realize *the salvation of his soul (life)*, realize *that blessed hope*, come into possession *of the required wisdom and knowledge* necessary to rule as a co-regent with Christ in the kingdom, and be shown *to have a wholesome tongue [a tranquil tongue] in this rule*.

This is what Scripture teaches concerning *the PRESENCE* of the tree of life in Eden, *the ABSENCE* of the tree of life in the world today, and *the coming inheritance of the saints*, *WHEN Christians will be ALLOWED to PARTAKE of "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the PARADISE of God."*

9

The Second Death

Hurt by, Not Hurt by

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11).

The words of the Spirit of God to the Church in Smyrna carry a special message to Christians who find themselves passing through times of various trials and testings during their pilgrim walk.

The Christians in Smyrna had been called upon to suffer, but NOT without cause or recompense.

“Suffering” is God’s *refining fire*, and those passing through the fire in Smyrna were extended a promise: “... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (vv. 9, 10).

The overcomer’s promise then comes into view, stating simply and explicitly that overcoming Christians in Smyrna would “not be hurt of the second death” (v. 11).

Trials, Testings

The sufferings which Christians in Smyrna were called upon to endure are summed up in the words, “...behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days.”

Over the years there have been numerous interpretations concerning the ten days of suffering in Rev. 2:10.

Some expositors have called attention to ten periods of Roman persecution during the first three centuries of the Church's existence and have sought to establish a correlation between the ten days in this verse and these ten periods in Church history, making each day represent a period of time.

Other expositors have sought to apply the ten days to a ten-year persecution during one of these periods, making each day represent one year.

Still other expositors have taken the number "ten" as symbolic, representing a limited but undefined period, usually within the larger period covered by the ten persecutions.

Regardless of how one looks upon the ten days of tribulation within a possible historical framework, the significance of the number "ten" *MUST* be taken into account.

"Ten" is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing to *ALL the days of tribulation, suffering*.

And if these ten days are to be thought of in connection with the ten periods of Roman persecution, they would have to be thought of *as showing completion* in relation to persecution by the Roman Empire.

But, regardless of how one views the matter relative to persecution by the Roman Empire, *the thought encompassed by the number "ten" MUST, of necessity, go beyond these persecutions*.

The seven Churches of Revelation chapters two and three *are indivisibly related*, revealing messages and promises to Christians throughout the dispensation; and the "ten days," in their numerical sense, *MUST cover the complete period — the entire dispensation*. These ten days of tribulation *can ONLY refer to ALL trials and testings coming upon ALL Christians throughout the dispensation*.

Trials and testings are *the NORM* for the Christian life, *NOT the exception*.

And the Epistles of James and I Peter have been written to encourage Christians passing through times of trials

and testings by holding out before them prizes, rewards, compensations, which are intimately associated with the salvation to be revealed — *the salvation of the soul* (James 1:21; I Peter 1:9).

This is the identical thought expressed in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna. A "crown of life" is in view, and the recipient of this crown is given the assurance that he will "not be hurt of the second death."

The Epistle of James begins its message with the statement, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

WHY? Temptations, testings, of this nature "worketh patience ['patient endurance']"; and allowing this patient endurance to have "her perfect work [end-time work]," Christians will become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing ['mature and complete, lacking nothing']" (James 1:2-4).

Christians are to look upon such trials in the same manner as the apostles looked upon trials which confronted them. The apostles, in circumstances of this or a similar nature, *rejoiced* that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his [Christ's] name" (Acts 5:41).

The Christian patiently enduring temptations after the fashion seen in James 1:2-4 is promised in verse twelve that "when he is tried ['approved' (at the judgment seat)], he shall receive the crown of life," a parallel statement to Rev. 2:10.

In both instances it is patiently enduring temptations, trials, and testings during the present time, with *a crown of life* in view; and this crown of life will be awarded *following one's approval at the judgment seat*.

Crowns *MUST be won* through patiently enduring temptations, trials, and testings during the present "race of the faith" (I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:11, 12; II Tim. 4:7, 8). And forfeiture of the proffered crown — resulting in non-approval at the judgment seat — *is a warned reality in these epistles*.

Note the warning in this respect:

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

Apart from the thought that a Christian can forfeit his crown, this verse would hold little meaning whatsoever. Christians receiving or not receiving crowns awaits decisions and determinations at the judgment seat.

Overcoming Christians will wear the crowns which they have won in the present race of the faith while occupying positions of power and authority with Christ during the coming age.

BUT, for non-overcoming Christians, the matter will be entirely different.

NO uncrowned person will rule as co-heir with Christ in the kingdom.

Manner of Usage in Revelation

“The second death” is an expression peculiar to the Book of Revelation, and it appears four times in this book (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).

This expression is used *twice* in texts where the word “overcometh” is used (2:11; 21:7, 8), *once* in connection with those who are martyred during the Tribulation (“beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God...” [20:4-6], with the thought of *overcoming* again seen), and *once* in connection with the unsaved dead from throughout Man’s Day (20:11-15).

“The second death” is defined in Rev. 20:14; 21:8 as being “cast into the lake of fire” and as having a “part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”

It is evident in Rev. 20:14 that “the second death” is used referring to the unsaved.

And it is equally evident that this expression is used in the other three passages in the Book of Revelation (2:11; 20:6; 21:8) *referring to the saved*, in connection with *overcoming* (not subsequently being hurt of the second death) or *being overcome* (and subsequently being hurt of the second death).

To state otherwise, gloss over this, or attempt to read into the passage what clearly is not there (*e.g.*, seeing the statement as a litotes, as some have) *is to ignore the CLEAR wording and meaning of the text.*

1) Overcomers Will Not Be Hurt of...

The “fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars” in Rev. 21:8 are usually looked upon by students of Scripture as a reference to unredeemed individuals, synonymous with the ones previously seen in Rev. 20:11-15.

However, contextually, this *CANNOT* be the case at all. The subject in verse seven, leading into verse eight, is *overcoming and realizing an inheritance in the kingdom as a son.*

(Reference is made to these overcoming martyrs ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years [Rev. 20:4-6].

Only *sons* can rule in God’s kingdom [*cf.* Job 1:6; 2:1; Luke 3:38; Rom. 8:18, 19], and *ruling in the kingdom* is spoken of at times as *realizing an inheritance in the kingdom* [Eph. 1:14, 18; 5:5; Col. 3:24; I Peter 1:4].)

Verse eight simply describes the “unbelieving [‘unfaithful’]” ones (*cf.* Luke 12:46) — the non-overcomers — and reveals that which will be their lot following their appearance before the Lord in judgment.

A similar description of individuals to that of Rev. 21:8 appears in I Cor. 6:8-10, *where an inheritance in the kingdom is also in view:*

“Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Know ye not that the unrighteous *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [the word, contextually, refers to *male prostitutes*], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals, the last of four references to different types of sexually immoral individuals],

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, *shall inherit the kingdom of God.*”

In this section of Scripture, the text clearly reveals that *Christians ALONE are in view.*

The words “ye do wrong” in verse eight (referring to the manner of living of the “brethren” in the Corinthian Church), leading into verses nine and ten, are a translation of the Greek verb *adikeo*. The noun form of this word (*adikos*) then appears in verse nine (translated “unrighteous”), establishing a connection with verse eight which provides the proper identification of the individuals Paul is addressing in verses nine and ten.

In verse eight, Paul calls attention to the fact that certain Christians in the Corinthian Church were conducting their affairs in an unrighteous manner.

(Those referenced in these verses would, of necessity, *have to be saved individuals*, for they were part of the Church in Corinth. *And Scripture recognizes “the Church” as comprised of the saved alone, NEVER a mixture of saved and unsaved individuals.*

The thought of both saved and unsaved individuals comprising a Church is solely man’s ideology, and it is an ideology which is *completely foreign to ANY use of the word “Church [Gk., ekklesia]” in Scripture.*

Ekklesia means “called out,” and that referred to through the use of this word during the present dispensation *would be a group of individuals called out of the world — something which could NEVER include the unsaved.*)

Continuing this same line of thought from verse eight into verse nine, Paul asks the question:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous [a reference to Christians from v. 8] shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”

The remainder of verse nine, along with verse ten, then lists a number of unrighteous acts in which it is possible for Christians to become involved, concluding with the statement in verse ten that those engaged in unrighteous living of this nature “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The subject at hand, *inheritance in the kingdom*, rather than eternal life, should be carefully noted.

ONLY Christians are presently in line to either receive or be denied this inheritance:

“If children, then heirs...” (Rom. 8:17).

A person *MUST* be a child of God, a child of the Owner, a Christian (or, in the past dispensation, he *MUST* have been an Israelite), before inheritance in the kingdom can even come into view.

These sections of Scripture in I Corinthians and the Book of Revelation (I Cor. 6:8-10 and Rev. 21:7, 8) are actually companion passages.

In both passages, those being addressed (Christians) and the matter being discussed (inheriting or being disinherited, with the kingdom in view) are *the SAME*.

There is NO message to the unsaved in these verses, for the issues of eternal life or eternal damnation *are NOT present*; and this fact *MUST* be recognized, else teachings surrounding inheritance in the kingdom, conveyed by the passages, will be missed entirely.

Revelation 21:8 *CANNOT* be equated with Rev. 20:14, even though both verses refer to “the lake of fire” and “the second death.” These two verses *are NOT dealing with the same thing, the same individuals, or even the same time period.*

Revelation 21:8 deals with the judgment of *the saved preceding the Millennium*, with *millennial verities* in view; and Rev. 20:14 deals with the judgment of *the unsaved following the Millennium*, with *eternal verities* in view. *NOTHING* is the same in the two passages, *save the existence of the same lake of fire, with an associated second death.*

The seven overcomer's promises in Revelation chapters two and three reveal different facets of that which God has promised to those who overcome the three great enemies confronting every Christian — *the world, the flesh, and the Devil* (ref. Chapter VII, pp. 102-113, in this first volume of the book). The promise to the overcomer in the Church in Smyrna that he would not be "hurt of the second death" is *ONLY one facet of the larger scope covered by ALL of the overcomer's promises to the seven Churches.*

The entirety of the matter appears to be summed up by the words, "inherit all things," in Rev. 21:7. *The overcomer will be a co-heir with Christ in the kingdom and realize ALL the promises to the overcomers in chapters two and three (cf. Heb. 1:2).*

2) To Have No Power Over Martyrs

The martyrs of Rev. 20:4-6 are themselves revealed as overcomers. These are the individuals who gain "the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" during the Tribulation (Rev. 15:2).

A segment of this group was seen when the fifth seal was opened (6:9-11; cf. 13:7-15); and they were told at this time to "rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

But when events depicted in Rev. 20:4-6 come to pass, the Tribulation will be over, the beast and false prophet will

have been cast into the lake of fire, the armies of the earth will have been overthrown, Satan will have been bound in the abyss, and the martyred saints of the Tribulation will have been resurrected to be judged (19:11ff).

These individuals, *overcoming during the Tribulation*, will, as Christians *overcoming today*, occupy positions with Christ in the kingdom.

(These positions though will be separate from those forming the bride of Christ.

The bride will be comprised solely of saved individuals from the present dispensation. But the Tribulation martyrs will come out of a period covering seven unfulfilled years of the previous dispensation, out of time covered by Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week.)

The second death will have "no power" over these Tribulation martyrs in view (v. 6). They, as will have been the case with numerous Christians prior to this time, will be revealed *as overcomers and will NOT* "be hurt of the second death" (v. 4).

As in Rev. 2:11; 21:7, 8, there is *NO* allusion in this passage to the unsaved dead being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

RATHER, an inheritance in the kingdom is in view.

And saved individuals, even though disinherited, with *ONLY* that referred to as "the second death" awaiting them, will *NEVER* be cast into the lake of fire to suffer the same consequences which the unsaved will one day suffer in this place.

To Be Hurt of...

EXACTLY what does it mean "to be hurt of" the second death in Rev. 2:11?

In the light of Rev. 20:4-6; 21:7, 8, which deals with overcoming or being overcome, *this can mean ONLY one thing:*

Non-overcoming Christians are going to “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8b).

“Fire” in Scripture is associated with *the judgment of the saved as well as the judgment of the unsaved;* and, following judgment, non-overcoming Christians will be “hurt of the second death,” which is associated *with the lake of fire.*

Thus, the time when this will occur *is following events at the judgment seat.*

And though the Christians’ works will be tried in fire at the judgment seat, this is *NOT* synonymous with Christians having a part in “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”

Rather, at this judgment, Christians will be shown to have either overcome or to have been overcome, with the carrying out of decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat occurring at a time following these events.

(Note in the judgment of the unsaved in Rev. 20:11-15 that the lake of fire and the second death enter into the matter *ONLY following judgment.* The lake of fire and the second death come into view *ONLY following decisions and determinations surrounding their judgment.*

And it will be the same for the saved preceding this time. They will first be judged. *ONLY then, ONLY following the decisions and determinations surrounding their judgment,* do the lake of fire and the second death come into view.)

Each of the overcomer’s promises *is millennial* in its scope of fulfillment. That in view through overcoming, or not overcoming — as the case may be — *will be realized during the 1,000-year Messianic Era ALONE.*

The fact that these are *millennial ONLY* in their scope of fulfillment can be illustrated quite easily.

Note the promises to two of the seven Churches in Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21. *NO* such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the Millennium.

Christ and His co-heirs, beyond the Millennium, will *NO longer* rule over the nations, as this rule is pictured in Rev. 2:26, 27. Rather, the Gentiles comprising these nations will, themselves, be brought into positions of rulership with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule extends beyond the earth, out into the universe (Rev. 22:2, 5).

And the Son, beyond the Millennium, will *NO longer* sit on His Own throne, as seen in Rev. 3:21. Rather, He will sit on “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” from whence universal rule will emanate (Rev. 22:1, 3, 5).

And the same is true relative to the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Smyrna, having to do with the second death. This promise *can ONLY be millennial* within its scope of fulfillment, which clearly reveals that the conditions alluded to for the non-overcomer in this promise will exist for *the duration of the Messianic Era ALONE, NOT throughout the eternal ages beyond.*

Scripture deals with *millennial rewards and/or loss, NEVER with eternal rewards and/or loss.*

This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards. And loss of rewards involves an association with *death* (Rom. 8:13), *something which Scripture clearly reveals will NO longer exist in the eternal ages beyond the Millennium* (I Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:1-4).

(Note Appendix V in this volume of the book, “The Mandate Given to Adam.” A large part of this article shows that Scripture is built on a septenary structure and has to do *with the present heavens and earth, NOT with the new heavens and new earth.*

And rewards or loss, part of Scripture within this septenary structure, *MUST be understood accordingly*. Rewards or loss, realized by Christians in that coming day, *can ONLY have to do with the last 1,000 years of the present heavens and earth, NOT with the new heavens and new earth.*)

In the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna, there is a clear implication that *those who do NOT overcome will be hurt of the second death*. And *any attempt* to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it clearly states *serves ONLY to destroy the promise, something which the Lord sounded a solemn warning against* (Rev. 22:18, 19).

On the other hand, the promise that *those who do overcome will NOT "be hurt of the second death"* would be meaningless unless this promise is taken at face value *and allowed to mean EXACTLY what it says*, clearly implying that *those who do NOT overcome WILL "be hurt of the second death."*

"The second death" in the Book of Revelation is associated with *the lake of fire* (Rev. 21:8). And those *who do NOT overcome* (v. 7) are going to have their part in this lake of fire (v. 8). That is, *they will be hurt of the second death by having a part in the lake of fire*.

But *EXACTLY* what is meant by a saved person being hurt of the second death and having a part in the lake of fire in Rev. 21:8?

Revelation chapter twenty-one moves beyond the Millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story concerning conditions as these ages begin.

Note the words, "It is done," in the first part of verse six. This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that *the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that finished state*.

Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight, overcoming and/or being overcome are again, for the last time, dealt with in this

book. And this takes a person back to the same place seen in chapters two and three.

Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses which open and begin this section.

First, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. Revelation 21:9-22:5 forms a commentary for this part of the section (21:1-6a), which has to do with conditions beyond the Millennium. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: "...and they shall reign forever and ever [throughout the endless ages]" (v. 5).

Then, the remainder of chapter twenty-two (vv. 6ff) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with conditions before and during the Millennium (21:6b-8).

And this will explain *WHY, outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era*, one will be able to find "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (22:15).

This information is given to shed light on and provide additional detail for verses in the preceding chapter (vv. 6b-8), and the information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the previous overcomer's promises, particularly the one to the Church in Smyrna dealing with "the second death" (2:11).

To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note *that those outside the gates* during the eternal ages will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth (21:24-27); but those *outside the gates* during the preceding Messianic Era, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the non-overcomers (22:14, 15). And the place which they will occupy *is described at least four OTHER ways in Scripture — through the use of Gehenna, the outer darkness, the furnace of fire, and the lake of fire.*

The picture surrounding an association between *Gehenna* and *the lake of fire* appears unmistakable.

As *Gehenna* was the place of refuse for the earthly city of Jerusalem, *the lake of fire* is seen as the place of refuse for the heavenly city of Jerusalem. *And as Gehenna was on the opposite side of the city from that side where God dwelled (south, as opposed to north [cf. Lev. 1:11; Isa. 14:13]), thus will it be with the counterpart to Gehenna in the heavenly Jerusalem.*

The lake of fire is used with respect to a place completely apart from Christ and His rule. And those "hurt by the second death" are seen occupying this place during the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

(*WHY* does Scripture associate non-overcoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ's millennial reign, in this manner?

The answer *would be the SAME* as the reason why Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages of eternity, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire was *NOT prepared for man*. Rather, it was prepared "for the Devil and his angels" [Matt. 25:41]. It was prepared for those who had rejected God's supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to acquire power and authority above that which had been delegated [Isa. 14:13, 14].

Thus, in this respect, the lake of fire is connected with REGALITY. And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire on EXACTLY the same basis.

Saved man, ignoring the very reason for his salvation [which is REGAL], will find himself associated with the lake of fire during the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].

And unsaved man, ignoring salvation and the reason for man's creation [which, again, is REGAL], will find himself associated with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages following the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].)

But, relative to Christians and the coming kingdom of Christ, is Scripture dealing with something literal? Or, is Scripture dealing with metaphors?

Note how Scripture uses metaphors to deal with this same thing elsewhere.

In John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, *where a burning with fire is referenced*. And the context both places has to do with either bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, which is *EXACTLY* the same thing seen in the Matthew thirteen parables (v. 42).

Or, as the matter is expressed in Revelation chapters two and three, either overcoming or being overcome.

And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast *into Gehenna* (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 23:15, 33) or being cast *into outer darkness* (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Overcoming or not overcoming and not being hurt or being hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 is expressed a slightly different way in Rom. 8:13:

“For if ye [a reference to ‘brethren’ in v. 12] live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

WHETHER Gehenna or outer darkness in Matthew, a burning with fire in John and Hebrews, being cast into a furnace or lake of fire in Matthew and Revelation, OR suffering death OR being hurt of the second death in Romans and Revelation, different facets of EXACTLY the SAME thing are in view.

ALL of these are used in contexts showing that they have to do with saved people in relation to fruit bearing and the kingdom.

Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are simply different ways of expressing *the SAME thing*. And since a literal casting into outer darkness, Ge-

henna, or a furnace or lake of fire *could NOT possibly be in view* (for these different places *could NOT possibly* be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), *it is evident that metaphors are being used throughout.*

BUT, relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply *NOT* expressed other ways in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving no room for any thought other than understanding *the matter as literal, NOT metaphorical.*

Aside from the preceding, *it is clear that ALL Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom.*

This is seen in type in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen. Both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture signifies a *kingdom*).

But note the stark difference in the place which each occupied.

Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always been (18:22; 19:27).

Lot though found himself in a place separated from the Lord, in a place where he also had always been (19:1, 30).

(Relative to Christians bearing or not bearing fruit, as seen in the parables in Matt.13, refer to the author’s book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom.*)

Saving a Soul from Death

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19, 20).

According to I Cor. 3:11-15, Christians whose works are burned at the judgment seat will “suffer loss.”

This CANNOT refer to the loss of rewards, for rewards enter into this judgment ONLY after a person is approved. The disapproved will have NO rewards to lose.

The ONLY thing in their possession possible for them to lose will be their souls (lives).

Matthew 16:25-27 refers to the saved coming under judgment and the possibility of a person losing his soul. The word "lose" in these verses and the word "loss" in I Cor. 3:15 are translations of the same word in the Greek text.

The loss experienced by the person in Matt. 16:25-27 is that of his *soul*; and it *MUST* be the same in I Cor. 3:11-15, for the referenced judgments are the same.

The Epistle of James, referring to the salvation of the soul at the outset (1:21), concludes by referring to the possibility of a Christian experiencing "death" in relation to his *soul* (5:19, 20).

This thought is set forth in an opposite sense to that of realizing the "salvation" of his *soul*. Failing in the present race of the faith (I Cor. 9:24-27; cf. II Tim. 4:7, 8), *a Christian will be disapproved at the judgment seat. He will have failed to overcome, be victorious; and, failing in this manner, he will lose his soul.*

Thus, experiencing "death" in James 5:20 can, contextually, *ONLY* be synonymous with *the loss of the soul (life)*; that is to say, a person entering into this experience will be "hurt of the second death." "Losing one's soul [life]" and "being hurt of the second death" are two ways of saying the same thing.

In order for a "second death" to exist, there *MUST* have previously been a "first death." Such a death, of course, is introduced in the fall of Adam:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Every man comes into this world via the birth from below and becomes a partaker of the first death through his association with Adam. And the second death will befall unredeemed man, with eternal verities in view, because of his continued association with Adam.

But for redeemed man, the second death is a different matter entirely.

Through a bringing forth from above, he is no longer associated with Adam and death in the same sense as unredeemed man; and the possibility of his being hurt of the second death concerns events which occur in an entirely different sphere of activity.

Adam fell from the position in which he had been created; and more is involved in Adam's fall than eternal verities, affecting only the unredeemed.

Adam had been called into existence to assume rulership over the earth; and the entrance of sin (along with bringing about eternal separation from God, apart from redemption) resulted in his disqualification to rule in Satan's stead. Adam, through the fall, found himself disqualified to occupy the very position for which he had been created.

Redemption itself *did NOT* place Adam back in this position (Gen. 3:21-24); *NOR* does redemption today place man back in this position.

Redeemed man today, as Adam following his fall and redemption, *remains barred from the tree of life, awaiting the salvation of his soul.*

Following the fall in Genesis chapter three, *the tree of life does NOT enter the affairs of man again UNTIL the salvation of the soul is brought to pass; and this will occur ONLY following the issues and determinations surrounding the judgment seat.*

Man ultimately occupying the position which Adam was created to assume requires that he be identified with a *new Federal Head — the second Man, the last Adam.*

The second Man, the last Adam, appeared and met Satan in a face-to-face confrontation *to show that He was fully qualified to function in the realm (a REGAL realm) which the first man, the first Adam, forfeited in the fall.*

He then provided redemption for man through the sacrifice of Himself and presently awaits that day when He will take the kingdom.

Those “in Christ” have been redeemed, with a view to their being co-heirs with Christ after He wrests control of the kingdom from Satan and his angels.

Those ruling with the second man, the last Adam, will constitute His bride and reign as consort queen with Him, as Eve would have reigned as consort queen with the first man, the first Adam, had both remained obedient and occupied the position for which man had been created.

(Note that Adam *could NOT* have immediately assumed the sceptre and reigned over the earth, with Eve at his side. The mandate given to Adam at the time of his creation [Gen. 1:26-28] would have prevented this.

Procreation and filling the earth with like-minded individuals was necessary prior to subduing and ruling the earth. That was clearly stated in the mandate.

This entire matter is clearly seen in the account of Saul and David in the books of I, II Samuel.

Though David had been anointed king in Saul’s stead, he didn’t immediately ascend the throne. That day awaited his having acquired a contingent of faithful followers to help control the affairs of state with him.

For information on the preceding, refer to Appendixes IV, V in this volume of the book.

Also, note *HOW* the widespread teaching that Adam held the sceptre, and Satan, through the fall, took it from him, *is completely out of line with the mandate in Genesis and the type in I, II Samuel.*)

The second death, as it will affect Christians, can be properly understood *ONLY* in the light of a parallel between that which Adam failed to realize in the past and that which unfaithful Christians will fail to realize in the future — the very purpose for their existence.

And as *the first death* entered into man's former failure, *the second death* will enter into man's latter failure — *for the saved on the one hand, and for the unsaved on the other.*

Experiencing “the second death” for the redeemed, through failure to realize one's calling, can, *in NO way*, pertain to eternal verities. Such *CANNOT* be in view at all.

Christians are present possessors of an eternal salvation based entirely upon the finished work of Christ at Calvary; and there can be *NO such thing* as “the second death” affecting any Christian on the basis of his presently possessed eternal salvation, else the finished work of Christ itself would be called into question and come into disrepute.

The Christians' association with “the second death” *can ONLY pertain to millennial verities and the loss of one's soul, the EXACT association provided by each reference in the Book of Revelation.*

Unfaithful Christians will experience “the second death” during the millennial reign of Christ. That is to say, they will lose their souls (lives) and be denied positions with Christ in the kingdom.

Again, “the second death” for such Christians is *millennial ONLY, NOT eternal.*

Non-overcoming Christians, through experiencing “the second death,” will be:

“...punished with everlasting [Gk., *aiionios*, ‘age-lasting’] destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...” (II Thess. 1:9b, 10a).

For the unredeemed though, “the second death” can only pertain to *eternal verities*.

As a result of Adam’s sin and their nonacceptance of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary, the unredeemed reside in a condition described in Scripture as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13).

They, in this condition, can have *NOTHING* to do with matters pertaining to rulership over the earth. Eternal verities *ALONE* are in view; and the second death, as it will affect the unredeemed, *MUST* be understood in this respect.

Unredeemed man’s judgment will occur *ONLY* following the Millennium, for he has *NOTHING* to do with the millennial age, *ONLY* with the ages beyond.

Thus, unredeemed man will experience “the second death” *following the Millennium, with ONLY the subsequent endless ages in view*. The unredeemed will *remain* in their spiritually dead condition and, in the lake of fire, be *eternally separated* from God:

“And death and hell [‘Hades’] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14, 15).

(For kindred or additional thoughts on “The Second Death,” refer to Vol. IV, Appendix II, in this book.)

10

The Hidden Manna, White Stone

Continued Provision to Rule and Reign

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17).

The third of the seven overcomer’s promises is given in the message to the Church in Pergamos, a Church located in a wealthy city where pagan worship flourished. Pergamos was a religious center filled with pagan cults, housing temples and shrines dedicated to the false gods of the Gentiles.

Pergamos, at this time, was also a center for the Roman government in Asia; and Satan, who ruled the earth through the Gentile nations (and continues to rule in this same manner today), was said to have his throne in Pergamos (v. 13).

This though could only refer to a prominent place for his rule in the Roman Empire rather than *to the actual location of his throne, for his throne would STILL be located in the heavens* at this time, *NOT on the earth*.

The Gentile nations ruling under Satan would exhibit power connected with Satan’s throne (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 10:12-20; Luke 4:5, 6). And it would have to be in this respect that Satan’s throne was said to be in Pergamos — a center of Gentile government, idolatry, and false worship.

Satan's throne *will NOT* actually be upon the earth *UNTIL* he, along with his angels, is cast out of the heavens shortly before the middle of the Tribulation (Rev. 12:7-12).

It will *THEN* be established in Babylon, Satan's earthly capital (Isa. 14:4ff; Dan. 2:31-45). And his throne will then be occupied by Antichrist, the last king of Babylon, preceding its destruction. Satan will give to this man "his power, and his seat ['throne'], and great authority" (Rev. 13:1, 2).

The Roman Empire was the great persecutor of early Christianity. And Jewish persecution also entered into the matter. But, preceding 70 A.D., this persecution was centered mainly around believing Jews during the offer and re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (from 30 A.D. to about 62 A.D.).

Christians, as the Jews, were monotheistic; and they fixed their eyes upon the one true God, not upon Caesar. And if this period of persecution is to be associated in a historical sense with that which is stated about any one of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, it would seemingly have to be the Church in Smyrna (2:8-11).

Numerous Christians during this period of Roman persecution were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. But the more widespread this persecution became, the more Christendom flourished and grew.

This is what led Tertullian, one of the early Church fathers who lived during that time, to say, "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*"

Along with a Satanic persecution *from without* during this period, there was also a Satanic corrupting work *from within*.

Very early in the dispensation, as seen in the fourth of the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen (v. 33), *leaven* was placed in three measures of meal, *which would have to do centrally with the Word of the Kingdom* (the subject matter seen throughout these parables).

And this resulted in a corrupting work *from within*, which paralleled the persecution *from without* (ref. the author's book, *Till the Whole Was Leavened* [a book dealing with the Parable of the Leaven in Matt. 13:33]).

In relation to leaven placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33, "leaven" in Scripture is spoken of *as a corrupting substance*, and the number "three" in Scripture is the number of *Divine perfection*. This number shows *Divine perfection within that which is in view — Divine perfection within that which is being corrupted by the leaven*.

"Three measures of meal" — three measures of ground grain, *used to make bread* — are in view. The reference is to *the Word of God* (Matt. 4:4; cf. Isa. 55:1, 2), *though NOT the Word in a general sense*.

Rather, the reference, *contextually*, is to *the Word in a specific sense, a specific part of the Word, a specific teaching in the Word. And a corrupting agent is seen being placed within that which is perfect*.

The subject at hand leading into this fourth parable in Matthew chapter thirteen *has to do with "the Word of the Kingdom."*

It has to do with HOW the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ would begin to be proclaimed in Christendom and HOW this message would progressively change because of something (a corrupting agent) placed within the message (vv. 19-24, 31, 33).

Thus, during the first several centuries of the dispensation, *there was NOT ONLY a Satanic work from without BUT one from within* as well.

Then, at the beginning of the fourth century, Satan brought matters *together* in his efforts to destroy Christianity. His efforts *from within* (the working of the leaven through several centuries of time) had produced such corruption within Christendom that he could merge these efforts with those *from without* (persecution by the Roman Empire).

And to bring this to pass, *Satan brought Roman persecution to an end and simply merged a CORRUPT religious system with a PAGAN political system.*

The Roman emperor Diocletian, coming into power near the end of the third century, was the last of the persecuting emperors.

His persecuting edicts were repealed during the opening years of the fourth century by Constantine the Great after he had come into power, and Christianity was then regarded as *simply another religion in the countries over which Rome ruled.*

This move by Constantine set the stage for a succeeding move *having far-reaching ramifications.*

The day came when Constantine (for reasons upon which historians differ) embraced Christianity, an act subsequently followed by his efforts *to force Christianity on the Empire as its ONE and ONLY religion.* And these efforts by Constantine began a sequence of events *which, toward the end of the fourth century, ultimately resulted in a COMPLETE merger of Church and State.*

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*, and in the year 395 A.D., Christianity was finally recognized as *the OFFICIAL and ONLY religion of the Roman Empire.*

Christianity then found itself COMPLETELY enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, COMPLETELY out of line with God's PLANS and PURPOSES for the new creation "in Christ."

If the message to the Church in Pergamos has to do with a particular period in Church history, it would have to be this period, where a merger of Church and State occurred. This is the period which followed the Roman persecutions; and the names "Smyrna" and "Pergamos," in this respect, would, themselves, be significant in pointing to these periods.

“Smyrna” is a transliterated Greek word meaning *myrrh* (a resinous gum used for embalming), which could possibly point to the martyrs under Roman persecution during the first several centuries of the Church’s existence. “Pergamos,” on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *gamos*, meaning “marriage”; and this word, *IF Church history is in view, could ONLY point to that period in Church history, beginning with Constantine, when the Church was wed to the world.*

This entire matter is depicted in the parable of the mustard seed in Matt. 13:31, 32. The mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, would, *through natural growth*, germinate and become “the greatest among herbs.” However, the mustard seed in the parable germinated and, after a period of time, experienced *an abnormal growth*, becoming a “tree.”

The very next and last thing stated in this parable is the fact that once the herb had become a tree, “the birds of the air” then came and lodged in its branches.

A “tree” in Scripture symbolizes *a national power* (Judges 9:8-15; Dan. 4:10-12, 20-22), and the “birds” in Matt. 13:32 are associated *with Satanic activity* (cf. vv. 4, 19).

The mustard seed germinating and experiencing natural growth portrays the Church during the early years of the present dispensation; and the herb subsequently experiencing abnormal growth, producing a tree, allowing the birds of the air to lodge in its branches, portrays that which Christianity became during and following the reign of Constantine.

The Church merged with the state, becoming *a tree, a world power*; and Satan with his agents simply moved in and began accomplishing that which, under Roman persecution, had not been accomplished.

Where *the pagan*, persecuting emperors seemingly failed, the first so-called *Christian* emperors succeeded. And out of this condition in which the Church found itself arose two major problems:

1) There were those in the Church in Pergamos who held to “the doctrine of Balaam.”

2) There were those in this Church who held to the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” (note also “the deeds of the Nicolaitanes” in the message to the Church in Ephesus [2:6]).

These two doctrinal problems crept into the Church early in its history, but they are not at all peculiar to the historical state of the Church as seen in Revelation chapter two.

The intermingling of Christians in the affairs of the world (governmental, and other affairs) is something from which the Church has never really recovered, and the same problems produced by conditions of this nature in the fourth century are still with us today (*cf.* II Tim. 2:3, 4).

Rather than Christianity converting the world, the world converted Christianity; and the lasting effects of this unholy relationship — very evident in the closing days of the Laodicean period in which we live — is what led Andrew Bonar, a nineteenth-century Scottish minister, to say:

“I looked for the Church and found it in the world. I looked for the world and found it in the Church.”

Doctrine of Balaam

Jude 11 records “the error of Balaam,” II Peter 2:15 records “the way of Balaam,” and Rev. 2:14 records “the doctrine of Balaam.” All three of these are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs within Christendom which not only defiles their high calling but which also dishonors the Lord who purchased their salvation with His Own blood.

The ERROR and WAY of Balaam appear in companion portions of Scripture and would seem to refer basically to

the same thing. *The ERROR of Balaam* is associated with “reward” in Jude, and *the WAY of Balaam* is associated with the “wages of unrighteousness” in II Peter.

Thus, *the ERROR and WAY of Balaam* have to do with “monetary gain”; and, according to the Old Testament account, monetary gain derived through this means is acquired through one’s willingness to compromise the principles of God and proclaim things contrary to the revealed Word of God (though Balaam was prevented from doing this and could only utter that which was in accord with the revealed Word of God).

The ERROR and WAY of Balaam can be found in Numbers chapters twenty-two through twenty-four.

Balak, king of the Moabites, hired Balaam to come into his land and pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. Balak had seen that which Israel had done to the Amorites; and knowing that this nation would soon be passing through his country, he was afraid because of the exhibited power which Israel exercised through the nation’s God.

Balak knew that the only way Israel could be defeated was through severing this power. Thus, Balak hired Balaam to come into Moab and pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, incurring God’s wrath upon them in order to ultimately bring about their defeat at the hands of the enemy.

However, once in Moab, in four separate prophecies, being unable to curse the one whom God had not cursed (Num. 23:8), only blessings proceeded from the lips of Balaam. Balak, angered by the turn of events, sent Balaam out of Moab to his own country.

The DOCTRINE of Balaam though was different than *his error and way*. *His doctrine* had to do with that part of his teaching which was contrary to the revealed Word of God, and it is seen in Scripture following the account of *his ERROR and WAY*.

1) Past Teaching

Scripture surrounding *the DOCTRINE of Balaam and its tragic results* is given in Num. 25:1-3:

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

The Israelites, after coming into Moab, began to commit fornication with the “daughters of Moab,” eat meat sacrificed to idols, and bow down and worship the false gods of the Moabites.

In order to put a stop to these sins and stay the hand of God’s judgment upon the entire camp of Israel, Moses was instructed to slay every Israelite who had “joined himself unto Baal-peor.” Because of their sins, twenty-four thousand Israelites perished under God’s judgment.

WHAT caused the Israelites to depart from the one true and living God (Who had delivered them from Egypt) and begin serving false gods and following the idolatrous ways of the Moabites?

The ANSWER is given in Num. 31:16:

“Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through *the counsel of Balaam*, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”

As previously seen, *Balaam could NOT curse the one whom God had not cursed. Only beautiful prophecies filled with blessings flowed from his lips when he was called into Moab by Balak. BUT, Balaam DID succeed in leading the Israelites astray through his COUNSEL.*

The Israelites, *through the COUNSEL of Balaam*, were led to commit fornication, eat things sacrificed to idols, and bow down before other gods.

And because of these sins, the judgment of God fell upon His people.

The COUNSEL of Balaam — i.e., “the doctrine of Balaam” — in the light of his prophecies (Num. 23, 24), could only have had to do with sins committed by the Israelites in view of promises and blessings associated with their covenant relationship with God.

In this respect, briefly stated, *THIS COUNSEL, THIS DOCTRINE could ONLY have had to do with* the fact that the Israelites were the covenant people of God, God’s covenants (Abrahamic and Mosaic at the time) could not be broken, and consequently *the Israelites, in relation to realizing covenant promises and blessings, could sin with immunity.*

Such, of course, was *NOT the case at all.*

It was true that the covenants established between God and Israel *could NOT be broken*; it was also true that Israel’s position as firstborn *could NOT be changed*; *BUT, it was NOT true that the Israelites, in relation to realizing covenant promises and blessings, could sin with immunity.*

God’s wrath was manifested because of the sins of His people, and the thousands of Israelites *who succumbed to the COUNSEL of Balaam were OVERTHROWN in the wilderness, SHORT of the GOAL of their calling.*

2) Present Teaching

The doctrine of Balaam is one of the most widely taught doctrines in the Church today. Christians know — as their counterparts in the Church in Pergamos — *that they have been saved by grace through faith, and NOTHING can alter that which has been effected by their having “passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1ff).

They NOW possess spiritual life, which can NEVER be taken from them; and, because of the unchangeable nature of the life which they presently possess, they reason that they can conduct their lives in any manner which they choose, and it will make NO difference.

However, as in the case of the Israelites, so in the case of Christians. Christians, as the Israelites under Moses, *have been saved for a specific, revealed purpose.*

Every Christian is enrolled in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27); every Christian is engaged in a conflict (Eph. 6:10-18; II Tim. 2:4, 5). *And the GOAL set before every Christian is to WIN the race, be VICTORIOUS in the conflict.*

God has made provision for Christians in order that at the end of the race they might say with Paul in II Tim. 4:7, 8:

“I have fought a good fight [‘I have strained every muscle in the good contest’]. I have finished my course [‘race’], I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...”

The enemy, Satan, on the other hand, *is doing EVERYTHING within his power to bring about DEFEAT in the lives of Christians. Satan’s MAIN objective in the present warfare is to prevent Christians from qualifying for crowns and thus positions of rulership with Christ in His coming kingdom.*

God is presently bringing into existence a new order of sons to replace the order now ruling in the heavens; *and the incumbent rulers — Satan and his angels — KNOW this and are doing ALL within their power to RETAIN their present governmental control over the earth.*

The main facet of the doctrine of Balaam which is being promulgated in Churches today is the teaching that future blessings and rewards have been set aside for every Christian solely on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary,

providing Christians with their present positional standing “in Christ.” In this respect, all Christians — *regardless of their conduct during the present time* — will receive crowns and positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

However, that which is clearly taught throughout the Word of God is to the contrary. *Though the Israelites’ positional standing before God could NOT be changed, they could NOT and did NOT sin with immunity.*

And EXACTLY the same thing is true concerning Christians. *Though the Christians’ positional standing before God CANNOT be changed, they, as the Israelites, CANNOT sin with immunity. Sin in the camp of Israel resulted in the Israelites being overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling.*

And it will be NO different for Christians.

“...and I took the crown that was upon his head” (II Sam. 1:10; cf. Rev. 3:11).

Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes

Outside of Revelation chapter two, there is no known sect in Church history (Biblical or secular) referred to by the name “Nicolaitanes.” Some early writers tried unsuccessfully to connect this group of individuals with *Nicolas of Antioch*; and others, following in their steps, try this even today. However, such a connection cannot be established, *which leaves one with a SOLE method of identification — the meaning of the word itself.*

The reference can ONLY be to a segment of those in the Church in Pergamos (known also to those in Ephesus) whose practices and doctrine are *self-explained by the term which the Spirit of God used to identify them.*

Apart from this means of identification, NOTHING can be known about the Nicolaitanes.

The word “Nicolaitanes” is a transliterated, compound word from the Greek text (*nikolaites*), derived from *nike* (“a victor,” “a conqueror”) and *laos* (“people”). Thus, the word simply means, “to be victorious over the people,” “to conquer the people.”

Using the meaning of the name itself after this fashion, the Nicolaitanes would have to be identified as individuals (leaders) in the Church who had subjugated the remaining Christians to their self-imposed authority — individuals comprising a ruling, priestly class (the clergy over the laity), *something condemned by Scripture in NO uncertain terms.*

Authority within the Church must ALWAYS be based SOLELY upon “service.” Those occupying positions of leadership (elders, deacons) MUST ALWAYS minister (serve) within their sphere of activity, which is to bear no relationship or resemblance whatsoever to authority exercised by those in the world (cf. Matt. 20:25-28; I Cor. 16:15, 16).

“Nicolaitanism” is simply a corruption of delegated authority within the Church, exercising this authority after a forbidden pattern — after the pattern set forth by those in the world.

Nicolaitanism, being introduced in the message to the Church in Ephesus, was apparently in existence very early in Church history; but it would only appear natural that this doctrine coming into full bloom awaited that period covered by the Church in Pergamos.

Nicolaitanism patterns itself *after the structure set forth in worldly governmental systems*; and it was through the actions of Constantine and others in the fourth-century Roman Empire, during the period in Church history which seemingly parallels that seen in the message to the Church in Pergamos, that the way was opened for an already-existing world system in the Church to follow this pattern to a level heretofore unseen.

THEN, once the union between Church and state had been established, worldly practices in the Church *could ONLY have become commonplace.*

Since the Church has never really separated itself from the position which it began to assume during the days of Constantine, *one can ONLY expect to find Christendom thoroughly saturated with "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" from the fourth century right on into the present day and time.*

In fact, viewing the matter from this perspective, while looking upon it within the framework of the leavening process in Matt. 13:33, the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes would have to be considered a false teaching which would undoubtedly *increase with time; and THIS would make it even MORE prominent in the Church today, near the end of the dispensation, than at any other time in history.*

The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal *CAN ONLY progressively continue its deteriorating work throughout the dispensation. And this leaven, because of longevity and the nearness of the hour, CAN ONLY do its most damaging work near the end of the dispensation, during the time in which we presently live.*

"The doctrine of Balaam" in Christendom, viewed within the framework of the same perspective and same leavening process seen in Israel, would have to be looked upon after an identical fashion *in relation to TIME.* This is a doctrine which will undoubtedly, as "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," be more widely proclaimed in the latter days than at any other time in the history of the Church. And "the doctrine of Balaam" will, in many instances, be proclaimed by those holding to "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

Such can ONLY be the ever-increasing, degenerate state of teaching emanating from the lukewarm Laodicean Church during the closing years of the present dispensation, immediately preceding Christ's return for the Church.

The Overcomers

Contextually, the overcomer's promise in Rev. 2:17 will be realized by those Christians who conduct their affairs in a manner separate from the widespread teachings of "the doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

It *DOES* make a difference how one lives after he has been saved; and the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than man, *MUST* be recognized as one seeks to live a life pleasing unto the Lord.

The beliefs and practices of those holding to "the doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" have completely permeated the Churches, such beliefs and practices are part and parcel with those of the world, and to the victor *ALONE* belongs the promise which God has given.

The overcomer ALONE has been promised that he will be allowed to partake of the hidden manna and will be given a white stone with a new name written on the stone, which no man will know other than the one receiving it.

1) The Hidden Manna

"Manna" is found in both the Old and New Testaments, but *"the hidden manna" is found ONLY in the third overcomer's promise in the Book of Revelation.*

The Israelites were provided manna during their pilgrim journey between Egypt and Canaan; and Christians, in like manner, have been provided Manna during their pilgrim journey between the antitype of Egypt (the world) and the antitype of Canaan (a heavenly land, wherein Christians will realize an inheritance). And any teaching concerning the future "hidden manna" *MUST be drawn from past and present appearances of the manna as a provision for God's people.*

(The fact that the future provision for God's people is presently "hidden" may be an allusion to the manna which was kept "before the Lord" in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle.

This manna was placed in "a golden pot" within the ark of the covenant, *hidden from the people but visible to God* [Ex. 16:14-35; John 6:48-54; Heb. 9:4].

So it is with the hidden manna during the present time.
It is hidden from the people but visible to God.)

The manna given to the Israelites during the wilderness journey was a provision for their physical needs.

This manna was a special food, prepared by God, containing everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the physical body. It was provided fresh day-by-day, and the Israelites were to gather and eat the manna after the fashion in which it was given.

NO supplementary food was provided; NOR was any required.

The "manna" which the Israelites were given in the wilderness typified *Christ*, "the living bread which came down from heaven."

And this "living bread" is the provision which Christians have been given for their wilderness journey. Christians "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood" (John 6:48-54) through the assimilation of the Word of God. *THIS Word is a SPECIAL food, prepared by God, containing EVERYTHING necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the spiritual life.*

The Spirit of God will render this food fresh day-by-day; and Christians are to partake of the Living Word through the Written Word, after the manner in which it has been given.

NO supplementary food has been provided; NOR is any necessary.

The "manna" upon which Christians presently feed has been given to properly PREPARE and EQUIP them for the wilderness journey.

And the “hidden manna” can ONLY be a parallel provision for things beyond the wilderness journey. The overcomers will be allowed to partake of the hidden manna to properly prepare and equip them as they rule and reign in the kingdom.

The provision is “manna” NOW and “hidden manna” YET FUTURE, both given to equip Christians during particular periods for particular types of service.

The hidden manna in the third overcomer’s promise and the tree of life in the first overcomer’s promise would have to be integrally related in this realm.

BOTH are set forth as provisions to properly equip Christians as they rule and reign, BOTH point to Christ (the true Manna, the true Tree of Life), and BOTH together will form God’s complete provision for the rulers in the kingdom.

However, a distinction *MUST* be drawn between the two, viewing each in the sense of a different facet of this provision.

Since partaking of the tree of life will provide that special wisdom and knowledge necessary to judge in equity, justice, and righteousness (*ref.* Chapter VIII in this volume of the book), it can be safely assumed that partaking of the hidden manna will apparently constitute God’s provision to properly prepare overcoming Christians in all other realms of life. And such could possibly include physical needs as well as spiritual needs.

Not that much has been revealed about the resurrection body. Christ partook of food in His resurrection body (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:5-14; *cf.* Matt. 26:29), but the reason for His partaking of food or details surrounding the matter are not given.

If the resurrection body requires sustenance for the rigors of the office Christians are to hold, the hidden manna may very well provide that sustenance, along with any other requirements for sustenance which Christians might possess.

2) The White Stone, New Name

During the days in which the Book of Revelation was written, and days prior to that time, giving one a *white stone* meant that the person had been charged with some offense but had been acquitted.

Since works *ALONE* will be reviewed at the judgment seat, *justification, shown by the white stone, MUST emanate out of a judgment of works.*

Thus, “justification” *on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary CANNOT* be in view at all, for overcomers and non-overcomers alike would receive such a stone if this were the case.

A white stone will be given to those Christians whose works endure the fire, revealing “justification” on the basis of that coming under judgment — *a JUSTIFICATION for the Christian on the basis of WORKS, WORKS emanating out of faithfulness (cf. Rom. 4:1ff; James 2:14-26).*

A white stone was also given to the victor in a contest or battle, which is *EXACTLY* what is in view through overcoming in the present battle, the present warfare, one “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’]” (Eph. 6:12).

Satan and his angels use the world and the flesh in their never-ceasing efforts to bring about a Christian’s defeat. And the promised white stone will be given *to the victor — to the one overcoming the world, the flesh, and the Devil.*

With the preceding in mind, understanding the white stone, along with the new name written on the stone, can possibly best be seen in Joseph’s exaltation by the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Joseph, because of his faithfulness to God, was, through Divine providence, brought into a position of such favor with Pharaoh that he found himself exalted to the throne, along with all attendant amenities.

Pharaoh took his own ring and “put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.”

He then positioned him as “*ruler over all the land of Egypt,*” and bestowed upon him a new name — “*Zaphnath-paaneah*” (Gen. 41:39-45).

The white stone will identify the overcomer as the one shown JUSTIFIED, VICTORIOUS in conquest, and ELEVATED to noble rank.

As Joseph in the type, *he will be PLACED in the position of a ruler and be GIVEN a new name.*

Joseph was placed over ALL Egypt, and the overcoming Christian will be placed over ALL the earth (“Egypt” is always a type of the world in Scripture).

He, as Joseph, will then be given “*a new name...which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*”

Such is the present prospect set before Christians, as given in the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Pergamos.

Concluding Thoughts:

When overcoming Christians go forth to rule with Christ in the kingdom, *EVERYTHING will be in a state of readiness.*

Through the provision of the tree of life, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, Christians will be properly equipped for EVERY facet of life in the kingdom as they rule the nations with Christ.

Through the provision of the tree of life, they will be given wisdom and knowledge to rule in equity, justice, and righteousness.

Through the provision of the hidden manna, they will be provided with the necessary sustenance (physical and/or spiritual) to equip them for the office which they are to hold.

Through the provision of the white stone, they will be given identifying stones, showing their victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

And through the provision of new names, they will possess identifications which the Giver and the recipients ALONE will know.

Through God's provision, a PERFECT rule will issue forth when man is once again brought back into the position for which he was originally created (Gen. 1:26-28).

ALL authority in that day will emanate from one throne (cf. Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21), and NOTHING short of an absolute rule will suffice.

11

Power Over the Nations

Realizing the Rights of Firstborn Sons

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And I will give him the morning star” (Rev. 2:26-28).

Remaining within the thought that each of the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three possibly points, in a particular sense, to a different period in Church history, the message to the Church in Thyatira would seemingly have to point to that period following the days of Constantine.

In this respect, it would show a continued description of deteriorating conditions in Christendom following the time when the Church became wed to the world during the days of Constantine, depicted in the preceding message to the Church in Pergamos.

(The manner in which the Church both began and will end during the 2,000-year dispensation can clearly be seen in Revelation chapters two and three in the messages to the Churches in Ephesus [the first Church dealt with] and Laodicea [the last Church dealt with]. But to contend for that revealed about any one of the seven Churches *to fit completely into a particular period of Church history* rather than covering, at least to some degree, *an overall scope of Church history* would be an incorrect way to view matters.

Even remnants of that seen in both the Church in Ephesus and the Church in Laodicea can be seen in Christendom throughout the dispensation. The thought inherent in that which is said about these two churches, in the light of related Scripture, has to do with Christendom *becoming LESS like that seen in Ephesus and MORE like that seen in Laodicea as the dispensation progresses.*

THEN, near the end of the dispensation, *AFTER* “the whole” has been leavened [Matt. 13:33], *ONLY that seen in the Laodicean Church will remain — a COMPLETELY leavened Christendom which, relative to any proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom, can ONLY be described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”* [Rev. 3:17b].

And a sad part of the matter is that the Church in that day — *which appears very much to be the present-day Church — will NOT even recognize that they occupy this COMPLETELY leavened position.*

In the same preceding respect, messages to the remaining five Churches seemingly fit into different periods of Church history [though each, after at least some fashion, would have to cover the whole scope of Church history].

Attention will be called to these different periods into which these different Churches seemingly fit [more so at particular times than at other times during the dispensation], but doing this is as far as the matter will be taken.)

Once the door had been opened and the world welcomed within, as seen in the Church in the Roman world during the fourth century, *the working of the leaven producing corruption in the true Biblical message could ONLY have dramatically increased.*

And any remaining remnants of pristine Christian doctrine and worship could ONLY have begun to gradually be corrupted by the ways and practices of the world, a corruption which would eventually encompass such proportions that ALL Christendom would ultimately be affected.

That which continued to occur following the time when the Church became wed to the world, seemingly described in the message to the Church in Thyatira in Revelation chapter two, is simply another facet of the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 — “...till the whole was leavened.”

The message to the Church in Thyatira, in this respect, would actually present the far-reaching results of that which was introduced during the days of Constantine.

The world had been invited within, providing added fuel for the leaven which was already working; *and this message would present the depths to which the world ultimately carried Christianity.*

Regardless of how one views matters in relation to Church history, *ONE fact CANNOT be denied.* The false teaching being accepted and practiced by Christians in Thyatira *was of such a degenerate nature* that the Spirit of God reached back hundreds of years in time and associated the entire matter with one of the darkest periods in Israeli history — *the days of Jezebel.*

And to properly understand conditions among Christians as they existed in Thyatira, one MUST understand conditions in the camp of Israel during that time.

The false doctrine being taught, accepted, and practiced in Thyatira emanated from “that woman Jezebel”:

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” [v. 20].

(Calling the woman teaching false doctrine in Thyatira by the name “Jezebel” *can ONLY be an allusion, through association, to Jezebel in the Old Testament, rather*

than to the actual name of the person [even though, conceivably, this could also have been the actual name of the person teaching in this Church; *BUT, even IF so, the allusion could ONLY STILL exist*].

The false doctrine being promulgated by this person [with its attendant results] evidently so closely approximated the beliefs and practices of Jezebel in the Old Testament [with their attendant results] that *the person teaching these things in the Church in Thyatira was referred to by the name of her counterpart from the Old Testament.*)

Jezebel

Jezebel appeared in Israeli history during Old Testament days at a time when wickedness was reaching a pinnacle through the unlawful deeds of a succession of Israeli kings.

The kingdom had been divided following Solomon's death, and the kings reigning over the northern ten tribes (the kingdom of Israel, beginning with the reign of Jeroboam) not only themselves "did evil in the sight of the Lord" but they also caused the people of Israel "to sin" (*cf.* I Kings 15:25, 26, 33, 34; 16:18, 19).

This wickedness began to reach a pinnacle during the days of Omri (the sixth king following Jeroboam), and it reached a pinnacle during the reign of his son, Ahab.

It is recorded of Omri that he "did worse *than ALL* that were before him."

And it is recorded of Ahab that he, in turn, "did evil in the sight of the Lord *above ALL* that were before him."

It was during the dark days of Ahab's reign in Israel that Jezebel appeared, with Baal worship subsequently introduced. Jezebel was the daughter of an idolatrous king-priest whom Ahab had married, a follower of the ways of her father and the one responsible for Baal worship being brought over into the camp of Israel.

It was after Ahab's marriage to Jezebel that he "went and served Baal, and worshipped him"; and it was during this time that he "reared up an altar for Baal" and "made a grove" (also connected with idolatry), doing more "to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (I Kings 16:25, 30-33).

Also, during the reign of Ahab, Jericho was rebuilt; and for centuries a curse had rested upon the person who rose up and rebuilt this city (I Kings 16:34; *cf.* Joshua 6:26).

Jezebel was responsible for the death of numerous prophets of the Lord, and she sought Elijah's life after he had destroyed the prophets of Baal, following the declaration of the one true and living God by fire on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:4, 17-40; 19:1, 2).

But the act which appeared to bring iniquity to the point where God could no longer stay His hand (*cf.* Gen. 15:16) was Jezebel's acquisition of Naboth's vineyard for Ahab. Jezebel, through forged letters, brought about Naboth's death in order that Ahab might possess his vineyard; and Ahab himself became a partaker of this deed through subsequently possessing the vineyard.

And because of this, *judgment of a nature befitting this sin* was pronounced upon both Ahab and Jezebel.

The Lord said of *Ahab*, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

And the Lord said of *Jezebel*, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (I Kings 21:1-23; *cf.* I Kings 22:35-38; II Kings 9:30-37).

Following this pronouncement of judgment upon both Ahab and Jezebel, Scripture provides a summary statement concerning the lives of these two individuals:

"But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, *whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*

And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (I Kings 21:25, 26).

Jezebel in the Old Testament *sets forth the epitome of corruption*, and there was a woman teaching in the Church in Thyatira whose influence and corrupt teachings were compared to those of Jezebel.

During Jezebel's day in the Old Testament, corruption was produced by bringing the things of the world over into the camp of Israel.

And during the day of her counterpart in the New Testament, corruption was produced through the same means — bringing the things of the world over into the Church.

A *terrible judgment* was pronounced upon Jezebel in the Old Testament (I Kings 21:23; cf. II Kings 9:30-37).

And a *similar judgment* was pronounced upon her counterpart and those who followed her ways in the New Testament (Rev. 2:21-23).

The message concerning Jezebel in Revelation chapter two, along with the Old Testament counterpart, is clearly stated *for ALL to behold*:

God will NOT tolerate Christians entering into an unholy relationship with the world. Such a relationship is associated with fornication, idolatry, and adultery.

And a relationship with the world of this nature, according to Scripture, *can end ONLY one way. It can end ONLY in death* (vv. 20-23; cf. Rom. 8:13).

Doctrine, Deep Things

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not known this doctrine, and which have not known the depths ['deep things'] of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come”
(Rev. 2:24, 25).

The teachings of the woman called “Jezebel” in the Church in Thyatira are referred to in a twofold, synonymous respect:

- 1) The “doctrine” of Jezebel.
- 2) The “depths [‘deep things’] of Satan.”

That is, what is referred to *as the doctrine of Jezebel* had to do with “the depths [‘deep things’] of Satan.”

God has His “deep things,” and Satan has his “deep things” (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24).

The deep things of God are associated with that which is separate from the present world kingdom under Satan, *the coming world kingdom under Christ*. Such is evident from the context of I Cor. 2:10.

The deep things of Satan, on the other hand, are associated with that which is diametrically opposed to the coming kingdom of Christ, *the present kingdom under Satan*. Such is evident from the context of Rev. 2:24.

1) *As These Things Affect Israel*

Israel’s standing among the nations *is that of firstborn*.

When God instructed Moses to say unto Pharaoh, “Israel is my son, even my firstborn” (Ex. 4:22), God was announcing the proper place which Israel had been called to occupy in relation to the Gentile nations of the earth.

Israel, as God’s firstborn son, was the nation in possession of the birthright; *and NO Gentile nation has ever or will ever come into such a position*. Among the nations of the earth, *a firstborn status is reserved for Israel ALONE*.

God has stated concerning Israel, “*You ONLY* have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2).

God has chosen Israel to be “a special people unto himself, ABOVE all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; cf. Ps. 147:19, 20; Rom. 9:4, 5).

During the days of Jezebel in the Old Testament, one of the world’s false religions was brought over into the camp of Israel, into the worship of the one true and living God. This was done under the direction and leadership of Satan in an effort to thwart the plans and purposes of God concerning Israel, God’s firstborn son, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture.

Israel had previously been called out of Egypt to ultimately realize these rights in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the introduction of Baal worship into the camp of Israel, through Jezebel, was nothing more than *Satan’s attempt to prevent Israel from assuming her God-ordained position as “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”* (Ex. 19:6).

The birthright possessed by Israel consisted of three things:

- 1) *Ruler of the household, under and for the Father.*
- 2) *Exercising the office of priest in the family.*
- 3) *The reception of a double portion of all the Father’s goods.*

The *FIRST* segment of the birthright placed the firstborn in the position of “heir” with respect to a *rule* of the Father’s house, under and for the Father. “Sonship” implies *rulership* and carries the thought of *supremacy*.

In this respect, Israel, a national power, was to be *the supreme nation and rule over ALL the other nations — ALL the Gentile nations of the earth.*

This earth, a province in the kingdom of God, constitutes *the Father’s house* when the birthright with respect to nations is in view; *and Israel, as God’s firstborn son, was to bear rule over ALL the nations in this house, under and for the Father.*

Israel occupied the standing *as firstborn among ALL nations* while still in Egypt, but Israel would not actually realize these rights *UNTIL* the nation had been removed from Egypt and established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The SECOND segment of the birthright would place Israel in a priestly position with respect to both God and the nations. Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests” in the midst of the nations (Ex. 19:6), resulting in the nations being blessed through Israel, in accord with Gen. 12:1-3.

A first-mention principle relating to these blessings had previously been established in Gen. 9:25-27. “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:6) was *first* “the God of Shem” (Gen. 9:26).

NEITHER Ham NOR Japheth had a God, and the ONLY way either could receive spiritual blessings was through Shem and his God.

Or, to say it another way, the descendants of Ham and Japheth (the Gentile nations) are “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12) *and can receive spiritual blessings ONLY through the descendants of Shem (the nation of Israel) and their God.*

Although the lineage of Shem also, among others, includes the descendants of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, spiritual blessings for nations emanating from these lines are derived through the same means as those for the Gentile nations (for, in this respect, these nations are looked upon as Gentile nations [Gen. 17:18-21; 21:5-12; 22:2; 25:1-6]).

The THIRD segment of the birthright placed Israel in a position to receive the double portion of all the Father’s goods. This segment of the birthright, as the first two segments, also had to do with Israel’s position among the nations.

There are two spheres of governmental power and authority in a rule over the Gentile nations — *EARTHLY and HEAVENLY* — and the double portion of the birthright pertained to Israel ultimately coming into possession of *BOTH* (cf. Gen. 22:17, 18).

It was NECESSARY that BOTH be extended to Israel at one or more points in the corridors of time, for Israel, as the firstborn, was the GOD-APPOINTED HEIR.

The way was opened under the leadership of Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, and later under Joshua on the east side of Jordan, *for Israel to go into the land and realize the earthly portion of this inheritance.*

BUT, the heavenly portion of the inheritance was NOT to be opened to the nation UNTIL almost fifteen hundred years later, as seen in the four gospels and Acts.

Under Moses and Joshua, when *the earthly portion* of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself dwelt in the midst of the nation.

Some fifteen hundred years later, when *the heavenly portion* of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself once again (in the person of His Son) dwelt in the midst of the nation.

Satan is the “god of this world [‘age’].” He is the “anointed cherub [‘messianic angel’],” *the one created to rule and reign* (Ezek. 28:14; II Cor. 4:4).

Satan and his angels presently rule the earth THROUGH the Gentile nations. They rule FROM the heavens THROUGH counterparts among the Gentile nations UPON the earth.

(Note Dan. 10:12ff. The “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” and the “kings of Persia” [v. 13] are heavenly beings [angels in the kingdom of Satan] who rule through counterparts in the kingdom of Persia [Iran today] on earth; and it is the same with all other Gentile powers, past and present.

For information on world government and angelic rule — past, present, and future — refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth.*)

The nation of Israel though has been placed in *an entirely separate and distinct position* from that occupied by the Gentile nations.

Israel is *NOT* to be “reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). Israel is *NOT* a nation through which Satan and his angels rule, as they do through the Gentile nations. The angelic prince of Israel in Daniel chapter ten (where the princes of Gentile nations are mentioned) is *Michael* (vv. 13, 21); *and Michael, with his own contingent of angelic rulers, is NOT one of the princes ruling under Satan.*

Thus, the deep things of Satan in relation to Israel and her calling in the Old Testament involved taking things from his kingdom, from the Gentile nations of the earth, and placing them among *a separate and distinct people who were NOT to be reckoned among those nations.*

In the case of his work through Jezebel, it was Baal worship which was transferred from the Gentile nations into the camp of Israel. And the Israelites, following Baal, *associated themselves with Gentile idolatry and could, under NO circumstances, realize their calling as firstborn while in this condition.*

Rather than Israel ruling over the Gentile nations of the earth, Satan's rule over these same nations would continue unabated, *with Israel uprooted from her land and NOT ONLY scattered among these nations BUT persecuted BY these nations.*

Rather than Israel realizing national blessings, with the Gentile nations in turn being blessed, Israel would incur God's wrath.

And it was to this end that Satan vented his wrath against Israel throughout the Old Testament, and it is to this end that he continues to vent his wrath against this same nation today.

(God's dealings with Israel on a national basis have been put on hold. Israel has been set aside for a dispensation, during which time God is removing from the Gentiles a people for His name.)

But Satan *knows* that God's discontinuance of His dealings with Israel in this manner is only temporary. He *knows* that God will once again turn to and resume His dealings with Israel relative to the nation's standing as *firstborn* [else the complete, revealed program of God — which Satan *knows* all too well — would remain unfulfilled].

Satan knows that Israel is yet to be placed at the head of the nations upon the earth, with the Gentile nations being blessed through Israel; and he continues to do ALL within his power to prevent this from happening.)

2) As These Things Affect Christians

A part of that which was being made known to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” in time past through Israel is *NOW* being made known through the Church (Eph. 3:9-11; cf. 6:11ff).

In time past, Israel was in possession of *BOTH earthly and heavenly* promises and blessings, having to do with *BOTH earthly and heavenly* spheres of power and authority in the kingdom (Gen. 22:17, 18; Heb. 11:8-16).

However, at the time of Christ's first advent, *Israel forfeited the heavenly portion of the kingdom; and an entirely new creation, the one new man “in Christ,” was called into existence to be the recipient of the proffered positions of power and authority with Christ from the heavens* (Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

The calling possessed by the Church is to ultimately inhabit, with Christ, the very realm where Satan and his angels presently dwell, ruling the nations as co-heirs with Christ from that realm.

The incumbent rulers (Satan and his angels) have forfeited their right to continue exercising power and authority from this realm.

Israel has forfeited her right to one day supplant these rulers.

And the Church was brought into existence to ultimately occupy this heavenly realm (cf. Eph. 6:11, 12; Heb. 3:1).

Although Israel still retains *her earthly calling* and will yet be removed from the nations of the earth to fulfill this calling, the Church will fulfill God's plans and purposes for *the heavenly portion of the kingdom* (along with certain O.T. saints who looked beyond an earthly calling to a heavenly [cf. Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29; Heb. 11:8-16]).

Christians are the ones who will be called forth *to dwell IN the heavens and REIGN as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.*

And Satan, knowing these things (things which very few Christians seem to have any understanding of at all [cf. II Cor. 4:3, 4]), *presently NOT ONLY directs his wrath against Israel BUT against the Church as well.*

The reason Satan placed "that woman Jezebel" in the Church in Thyatira is the same reason that he placed "Jezebel" in the camp of Israel during Old Testament days.

The deep things of Satan, introduced into the camp of Israel in the Old Testament and into the Church in Thyatira in the New Testament, *have to do with the incumbent ruler's (Satan's) efforts to thwart God's plans and purposes concerning others moving into regal positions of power and authority presently under his dominion and control.*

Satan has done, is doing, and will continue to do ALL within his power to prevent BOTH Israel and the Church from realizing their respective calling.

And the intensification of his efforts during the closing days of the dispensation in which we presently live is something which Christians who aspire to be overcomers and realize their calling MUST be keenly aware of and understand (II Peter 1:1-11).

Satan's efforts in his warfare against Christians today has *ONE primary goal* in view:

OVERCOMING CHRISTIANS rather than seeing Christians OVERCOME HIM, resulting in their disqualification to occupy proffered positions in the coming kingdom of Christ.

The deep things of Satan introduced into the Church today, as in the camp of Israel during Elijah's day, have to do with the things of the world brought over into the things of God — the world in the Church — resulting in Christians (as the Israelites) being led astray.

And, in the light of the Old Testament counterpart, this is what is involved in Jezebel's seduction of the Lord's servants "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" in the Church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:20); and those Christians, defiled after this fashion, through her efforts, who fail to repent of their deeds, will suffer "death" (vv. 21-23; cf. Rom. 8:13), which could *ONLY* be an allusion to the previously mentioned "second death" (v. 11).

Christians, as the Israelites, possess a birthright; and this birthright consists of the same three things as the one possessed by Israel:

- 1) *Ruler of the household*, under and for the Father.
- 2) Exercising the office of *priest in the family*.
- 3) The reception of a *double portion of all the Father's goods*.

Overcoming Christians will realize *the first* aspect of the birthright through ruling as "joint-heirs" with Christ in the kingdom (Rom. 8:17), *the second* through ruling as "kings and priests" (Rev. 5:10), and *the third* through coming into possession of both heavenly and earthly aspects of the inheritance with Christ — *ruling FROM the heavens OVER the earth* (Ps. 2:8, 9; I Peter 1:4; cf. Gen. 24:10, 36, 53; John 16:13-15).

Non-overcoming Christians though will have forfeited their rights of primogeniture, realizing *NO* aspect of the birthright. They *will NOT* be among the “many sons” which Christ will bring unto glory with Him to rule “the world [‘inhabited world’] to come” (Heb. 2:5, 10).

“The deep things of Satan” will have accomplished their purpose in the lives of such Christians; and they, as Esau, when they realize that which could have been theirs, *will lift up their voices and weep* (Heb. 12:14-17; cf. Gen. 25:27-34; 27:26-38).

(Note in the previous respect the first four parables in Matt. 13, parables *having to do with fruit-bearing*, showing what Satan *has done to produce barrenness among Christians throughout the 2,000-year dispensation*.

Ref. the Author’s book, *Till the Whole Was Leavened*.)

Kingly Power

One day the Lord Jesus Christ is going to receive a kingdom. “The kingdom of the world” will become “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15, ASV; cf. Ps. 2:1ff; 110:1ff; Dan. 7:9-14).

Satan and his angels will be put down, Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) will move in and take over the government, THEN, the overcomer’s promise given to Christians in the Church in Thyatira will be fulfilled.

The main thrust of the matter leading into and including this overcomer’s promise centers around two world kingdoms — *the present kingdom of Satan, and the coming kingdom of Christ*.

The overcomer’s promise then revolves around *being victorious over the things of the present kingdom* (introduced into the Church by Satan through “that woman Jezebel”).

A Christian allowing himself to be overcome by the things of the present kingdom *will be DENIED participation in the coming kingdom*, but a Christian overcoming the things of the present kingdom *will be GIVEN “power over the nations” in the coming kingdom.*

Concerning the Christians' present activities in relation to one kingdom or the other, there is a specific promise concerning recompense, *whether negative or positive:*

“I will GIVE unto EVERY one of you ACCORDING to your WORKS” (Rev. 2:23b).

Christians involving themselves with the present kingdom of Satan will be recompensed accordingly (vv. 20-23).

Christians looking out ahead toward the coming kingdom of Christ, refusing to involve themselves with the present kingdom, will also be recompensed accordingly (vv. 24-28).

The time for the rendering of a “just recompense” to every Christian, according to the context and overall message of Revelation chapters one through three, will be at the future “judgment” of Christians — the judgment seat of Christ; the issue, as in I Cor. 3:11-15, will be “WORKS,” with a view to EVERY Christian being revealed as EITHER an overcomer OR a non-overcomer; and the OUTCOME of this revelation has been CLEARLY made known.

Christians revealed as overcomers will be given “power over the nations,” while those Christians revealed as non-overcomers will be denied such power (Rev. 2:26, 27).

That the overcomer's promises are NOT ONLY millennial in their scope of fulfillment BUT are also connected with REGAL positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom is further made plain by the message to the Church in Thyatira.

NO such scene as that depicted in verses twenty-six and twenty-seven exists during the present dispensation preceding the Millennium; NOR will such a scene exist during the

eternal ages following the Millennium.

And that which is true of the overcomer's promise here is equally true of ALL seven of the overcomer's promises throughout chapters two and three.

Christians before the judgment seat of Christ will be judged ON the BASIS of WORKS to determine their STATUS relative to OVERCOMING, with a view to REGAL POSITIONS in the KINGDOM.

The Morning Star

Not only were the overcoming Christians in Thyatira promised kingly power with Christ but they were promised "the morning star," *which is Christ Himself* (Rev. 22:16).

In Rev. 2:26-28, the promise of "the morning star" appears immediately following the promise concerning "power over the nations."

And in Rev. 22:16, the identification of Christ as "the bright and morning star" immediately follows His identification as "the root and offspring of David."

The clear implication in the latter reference, in the light of the overcomer's promise to the Church in Thyatira, is an allusion to *His REGAL position as David's Son*. The promise of "the morning star" to the overcoming Christian is an apparent reference to a special, peculiar relationship with Christ, *which can ONLY be connected with His REIGN*.

The expressions "morning star" in Rev. 2:28 and "bright and morning star" in Rev. 22:16 are used of Christ's relationship with His Church (anticipating His reign), as the expression "Sun of righteousness" in Mal. 4:2 is used of His relationship with Israel (anticipating His reign).

The morning star appears in the sky shortly before the dawn, shortly before the sun appears on the horizon to lighten the sky.

The apparent thought is that Christ will appear as the “bright and morning star” for the Church at the close of the present dispensation, when the completely leavened Church has just experienced her darkest hour.

And He will appear to Israel at the close of the past dispensation — at the close of Daniel’s seventieth week (seven years, which complete the past dispensation), following a repentant nation having just experienced her darkest hour (following the Tribulation) — as the “Sun of righteousness... with healing in his wings.”

Christ will first complete His dealings with the Church, with overcoming Christians being brought into a special, peculiar relationship with Him, *anticipating their reign as co-heirs.*

Christ will then turn to Israel and deal with His brethren after the flesh in such a fashion that their future confession, as recorded in Isaiah chapter fifty-three, will include the statement, in fulfillment of Mal. 4:2:

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we are healed*” (v. 5).

Concluding Thoughts:

There is a battle presently being waged, it is being fought on two fronts, and the central issue involves *governmental control over the earth.*

This battle is being waged by Satan and his angels, and it is being waged against Israel on one front and against the Church on the other.

God has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” through Israel in the Old Testament and through the Church in the New Testament, *that a completely new order of rulers (sons) is about to be brought on the scene.*

And Satan with his angels, continuing to have this demonstrated to them, remain constantly at war against these two creations God has called into existence *to be heirs in the coming kingdom.*

Satan knew in the beginning when he sought governmental power and authority beyond that which had been delegated to him, seeking to be “like the most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14), *that he MUST be wholly successful OR face eternal judgment; and he knows today that failure in his onslaughts against Israel and the Church can ONLY bring about his long-impending, awaiting judgment.*

Thus, the picture we presently have set before us is THAT of warfare being waged by a mighty fallen celestial being and his minions — the god of this age and those ruling with him — who know that their time is short unless they can somehow thwart God’s plans and purposes concerning Israel and the Church.

THAT is what the warfare is about! And Satan knows, from his own experience in the past, that in failure there can be NO room for mercy.

Resultingly, he placed a Jezebel in the camp of Israel in the Old Testament, and he placed a Jezebel in the Church in the New Testament.

These two moves had to do with the deep things of Satan, he continues with his deep things today, and he will continue as long as he is allowed to remain in power.

NOTHING has changed in his plans and methods; NOR will anything change, aside from a progressive intensification of his efforts as the dispensation draws to a close.

12

Clothed in White Raiment

The Righteous Acts of the Saints

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:5).

The message to the Church in Sardis presents a continued, extended view of the “children” of the adulterous woman, Jezebel, from the preceding message to the Church in Thyatira. And matters can be viewed in this manner, as Scripture moves from one epistle to the next, for most of the Christians comprising the Church in Sardis *possessed a name that they LIVED, though they were actually DEAD* (v. 1; cf. 2:23).

Along with a continued, extended view of the Church *in this spiritually destitute condition*, attention is also called to a “few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments” (v. 4).

Thus, there was a remnant within this Church, comparable to the remnant of seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal during Elijah and Jezebel’s day in the Old Testament (I Kings 19:18).

This remnant in the Church in Sardis was comprised of those Christians presently overcoming the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And these are the ones who will one day be revealed as overcomers, subsequently realizing the overcomer’s promises during the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

Many expositors have sought to associate the Church in Sardis with the Reformation period in Church history, which began with events during the sixteenth century.

The allusion to this period of time and beyond — if the message to the Church in Sardis is to be associated with a particular period in Church history (though not really to the Reformation *per se*) — would appear to be correct, with the emphasis placed in two realms:

1) That which continued in existence within the mainstream of Christendom from the days represented by the preceding message to the Church in Thyatira.

2) That which would ultimately result within a smaller segment of Christendom because of the Reformation, represented by the succeeding message to the Church in Philadelphia.

And, as previously seen, these two segments of the Church in Sardis *were represented by those who were DEAD (v. 1) and by those who had NOT defiled their garments (v. 4).*

Then, the following two epistles, the messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea, then project these two segments of Christendom *on into the latter days of the dispensation. They will exist side-by-side for a time, with the Church increasingly becoming more and more Laodicean, "till the whole" has been leavened (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8).*

The Reformation itself *was NOT a recovery of the doctrine surrounding "that blessed hope" but rather a recovery of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith.*

The reformers gave little attention to events surrounding Christ's return.

Although they knew Christ would return at some future date, they turned their attention almost exclusively to the message of salvation by grace.

Many of the reformers looked upon the Church as an instrument through which God would ultimately effect world conversion, something to be accomplished *prior* to His Son's return. And, to these men, Satan's main thrust to counter this goal was channeled through the Roman Catholic Church, with each succeeding pope holding the dubious honor of being the Antichrist.

The origin of much of the false postmillennial thought, still present to some extent in Christendom today, can be traced to the eschatological views held by many of the reformers.

Postmillennial thought in Christendom today though is usually seen in a different form than in the past.

Today, it can be seen mainly in an increasingly popular ideology known as *theonomy* (a name given to the false teaching that the Church will be instrumental in bringing about the kingdom of God on earth through gradually taking control of the present government under Satan).

However, there is another side to the picture surrounding the course which Christendom began to take at the time of the Reformation. The truth concerning the return of Christ within the framework of premillennial thought, also present within the Church today, is something which likewise grew out of the Reformation.

During the seventeenth century, small numbers of Bible students in Europe (who, themselves, were among those ultimately reached with the true message of the gospel of the grace of God as a result of the Reformation) began turning their attention to the prophetic Scriptures.

Their work was furthered by other students in the eighteenth century; but the main impetus awaited the work of students in the nineteenth century, who built upon and brought to fruition the work of their predecessors.

It was during this latter period that the great advances

in prophetic study were made, according a proper treatment to the numerous truths surrounding Christ's return.

The recovery of these truths was accompanied by a great resurgence in missionary endeavor, *and it is THIS recovery and resurgence which appears to mark the BEGINNING of that period covered concurrently by the messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea.*

There is NOTHING BAD said about the Church in Philadelphia, and there is NOTHING GOOD said about the Church in Laodicea.

An APEX of the outworking of that which had its beginning during the days of Martin Luther can be seen in the message to the Church in Philadelphia.

And the END of that which began centuries earlier — seen on the one hand when the leaven was placed in the three measures of meal, and on the other hand through that which occurred during the days of Constantine and the ensuing years — can be seen reaching its completion at the end of the dispensation in the message to the Church in Laodicea.

Dead... Undefined

The thought of many of those in the Church in Sardis described as *living, but being dead, could ONLY be looked upon in an opposite sense to the thought of a few in the Church having "undefiled garments"* (vv. 1, 4).

In this sense, "dead" would be equated *with DEFILED*, and "undefiled" would be equated *with LIVING*. And Christians *ALONE* are in view, those capable of producing *works* pleasing unto the Lord (vv. 1, 2; cf. Eph. 2:10).

"Death" in a spiritual sense is associated with BOTH the unregenerate and the regenerate.

The unregenerate are spoken of as being "dead in trespasses and sins" because of *unbelief* (Eph. 2:1).

And the regenerate can be spoken of in the sense which they are presented in Rev. 3:1 — *living, but dead* — *because of unfaithfulness* (cf. I Tim. 5:6; James 5:5), associated with what James calls *a dead faith*.

(The words “faith” and “believe” are different forms of the same word in the Greek text — noun [faith] and verb [believe] forms. Thus, either usage would carry the same meaning [e.g., Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8].)

James is the great epistle dealing *with faith and works* in the sense that they are presented in the messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

Works emanate out of faith; and James 2:14-26 refers *to a dead faith* which is incapable of producing the type works necessary to bring faith to its proper goal, the exact condition of those in Sardis whose existing state (“dead”) was associated *with works*.

They possessed works, BUT these works did NOT emanate from a living, active faith.

Rather, such works emanated *from a dead, inactive faith* and were the type works *which would be burned* at the judgment seat (works described in I Cor. 3:12 by three combustible materials, “wood, hay, stubble”).

The distinguishing characteristic between *those who were dead and those with undefiled garments* in the message to the Church in Sardis is, thus, seen in their “works.”

This is really the overriding subject matter in each of the seven messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

Each message, following descriptive aspects of Christ *as Judge* in the midst of the Churches (in keeping with the description given in chapter one), begins the same way:

“I know thy works...” (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

And to properly understand the entire matter, along with the review and manifestation of two types of works at the judgment seat of Christ, *one MUST understand the relationship between faith and works in James chapter two.*

James, as all of the New Testament epistles, deals centrally *with the future salvation of the soul* rather than the salvation which we presently possess, the salvation of the spirit (cf. James 1:12, 21, 22; 5:19, 20).

BOTH are wrought on the basis of WORKS.

Our present salvation (salvation of the spirit) has been wrought *on the basis of Christ's past, completed work*; and our future salvation (salvation of the soul) will be wrought *on the basis of the present works of those who have been saved on the basis of Christ's past, completed work.*

The review of works at the judgment seat will be to determine the TYPE works, with a view to the salvation or loss of the soul.

James 2:14-26 opens with two self-answering questions, and the structure of these questions in the Greek text *requires that both be answered in the negative* (the Greek negative "me" appears in the latter question [designating a "no" response], and *the integrally, inseparable nature of the two questions shows that the first MUST be answered in the same sense*).

The first question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection *with profit*, and the second question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection *with salvation*.

These two questions could possibly be better understood by translating the verse,

"My brethren, if anyone says he has faith, but does not have works, he cannot profit, can he? Faith cannot save him, can it?" (v. 14).

"Profit" and "salvation" are linked together in such a

manner in James 2:14 *that one CANNOT be realized apart from the other.*

That is, apart from an accrual of “profit,” *salvation CANNOT be realized;* or, to state the matter another way, an accrual of “profit” leads to (is for the purpose of) *the realization of salvation* (at a future date).

And James specifically states *that NEITHER can be realized by faith ALONE. Works MUST enter in and have their proper place in the matter.*

One *CANNOT profit* apart from an initial investment, and one *is in NO position* to procure the salvation of which James speaks apart from presently possessing salvation.

The Greek word translated “profit” is derived from a root word which means “to increase”; and the thought of an “increase” *does NOT enter into the picture UNTIL one has an initial supply, making an “increase,” or “profit,” possible.*

“Profit” *is always* something in addition to that which one already possesses. Initial investments, from which individuals can profit, *are possessed ONLY by the Lord’s Own servants (Christians).*

There is NO such thing as the word “profit” being used in this sense in connection with the unsaved, *for they have NO initial investment in this realm.*

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) provide two of the best Scriptural examples concerning “profit” on an initial investment in relation to the Lord’s servants during the present day and time.

As brought out in these two parables, *the Lord has delivered ALL His goods to ALL His servants and has left them with the command, “Occupy till I come.”*

The servants of the Lord *are to trade and traffic in the Lord’s business during His time of absence.* Those who do so, under the leadership of the Lord, *will realize a “profit” (cf.*

Matt. 25:15-17, 19-23; Luke 19:15-19). And through realizing a profit, or increase, on the initial investment, *they will experience "the salvation of their souls"* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

On the other hand, those who refuse to use the initial investment will not only remain profitless but they will, as a consequence, *suffer "loss"* (cf. Matt. 25:15, 18, 19, 24-30; Luke 19:15, 20-26). *They will experience "the loss of their souls"* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

Consequently, that which is involved in James 2:14, as explained in subsequent verses, *is simply FAITHFULNESS to one's calling (resulting in works), or UNFAITHFULNESS to one's calling (resulting in NO works [or valueless works NOT associated with faith])*.

Works of the nature referred to in this verse emanate out of "faith" and bring faith to its proper goal, which is the salvation of one's soul (James 2:22; I Peter 1:9).

Apart from such a manifestation of faith, giving rise to works, *there can be NO profit; NOR can the inherently connected salvation follow (the salvation of the soul)*.

In the message to the Church in Sardis in Revelation chapter three, two types of works are in view. The first type *has to do with works NOT emanating from faith*, and the second type *has to do with works of the opposite kind, those emanating from faith*.

The first type works are those performed by Christians *apart from the leadership of the Lord*. *Faith*, associated with the Lord's leadership, *is NOT involved*; and such works are *invariably* performed under the leadership of man for the praise, honor, and glory of man.

The second type works are those performed by Christians *under the leadership of the Lord*. *Faith*, associated with the Lord's leadership, is the primary factor; and such works *ALWAYS* redound to the praise, honor, and glory of the Lord.

BOTH type works will be very evident at the judgment seat — those which are worthless (comparable to “wood, hay, stubble”) and those of intrinsic value (comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones”).

The result of the manifestation of *works* at the judgment seat will be twofold:

- 1) The revelation *of an ACCRUAL of profit, resulting in the salvation of the soul on the one hand.*
- 2) The revelation *of NO profit, resulting in the loss of the soul on the other hand.*

Such will be the end of all works viewed, as seen in the seven messages to the seven Churches.

White Raiment

The “white raiment” in which the overcomers in Sardis are to be clothed *can ONLY have to do with the wedding garment* mentioned in Matt. 22:11, 12 and Rev. 19:8. The overcomers, synonymous with the bride, are to “array themselves” rather than “be arrayed”; and this fact should be reflected in the translation of both Rev. 3:5 and Rev. 19:8.

The verb appears in the middle voice in the Greek text in both instances, showing the subject (the overcomers, forming the bride) participating in the results of the action, necessitating the thought that the overcomers are the ones who, themselves, will accomplish this feat.

The “fine linen, clean and white” is specifically said, in Rev. 19:8, to be “the righteousness [‘the righteous acts’] of the saints.”

The word translated “righteousness” (KJV) *is plural* in the Greek text and can only be a reference to “righteous acts [i.e., the ‘righteousnesses of saints’],” *which are specifically said to form the wedding garment.*

Such righteous acts are synonymous with works emanating out of faithfulness to one's calling; and unfaithful Christians, accordingly, will NOT possess works of this nature.

Their works, revealed as comparable to "wood, hay, stubble" at the judgment seat, will be burned (cf. Isa. 64:6); and WITHOUT acceptable works/righteous acts, they will possess NO material to make up the "fine linen" comprising the wedding garment.

Thus, such Christians will appear naked and ashamed in the presence of their Lord in that day.

The two types of righteousness in Rom. 5:17 and Rev. 19:8 correspond to the TWO types of justification in James 2:24 (ONE is acquired on the basis of the work of Another [Christ], and the OTHER is acquired on the basis of the Christians' own works).

There is a justification by FAITH, and there is a justification by WORKS.

ONLY those who have been justified by FAITH are in a position to be justified by WORKS.

That is, a person MUST FIRST be justified on the basis of the work of Another BEFORE he can be justified on the basis of his own works (emanating out of faithfulness to his calling).

Or, to state the matter within another frame of reference, a person MUST first be a part of the body (be "in Christ") BEFORE he can be removed from the body (removed to form the bride, comprising the antitype of Eve removed from Adam's body to form his bride).

Those in Sardis who had NOT defiled their garments would be allowed to walk with Christ, arrayed in white raiment.

They would NOT be found among those whose works were lacking, those described by the word "dead."

But even to the Christians with defiled garments the call was to "remember...and hold fast, and repent" (v. 3). It was NOT too late for those possessing works which would one day be shown worthless at the judgment seat to become faithful

servants of the Lord and produce works of intrinsic value.

The overcomer's promise was extended to *ALL* in Sardis; *BUT, not all* would heed the message, overcome, and realize this promise.

The clear, simple lesson taught by comparing Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 3:5; 19:8 is the *ABSOLUTE NECESSITY* of possessing a wedding garment *IF* one would be numbered among those forming the bride of Christ.

The wedding garment is associated *with overcoming* (Rev. 3:5), *possessing righteous acts* (works emanating out of faithfulness [James 2:14-26; Rev. 19:8]), and *gaining admittance to festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb* (Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 19:9).

The overcomers ALONE will possess the wedding garment, and this garment ALONE will be recognized as the proper attire necessary for admittance to and participation in the marriage festivities.

The Book of Life

The possibility of Christians having their names *blotted out* of the book of life, in accord with Rev. 3:5, has troubled many individuals.

Such individuals view the book of life as a record containing the names of all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they know that a Christian having his name blotted out of such a book *is an absolute impossibility*.

One's eternal salvation is just as secure as the finished work of Christ upon which it rests.

And to infer that a Christian could possibly one day lose his eternal salvation would be questioning the complete efficacy of Christ's finished work, or of the corresponding work of the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life (on the basis of Christ's finished work).

The problem emanates *from wrongly associating “the book of life” with eternal salvation.*

God has many books; and in these books He keeps records of many different things, records which will one day be opened (cf. Ps. 56:8; 139:16; Zech. 5:1-3; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 5:1, 2; 13:8; 20:12).

Note, for example, that a number of books will be opened at the future judgment of the unsaved dead in Rev. 20:11-15, including “the book of life” (v. 12). *God has a library in heaven, and the book of life is ONLY one book in this library.*

A book which seems to be entirely separate and distinct, but often confused with the book of life, is *the Lamb’s book of life in Rev. 13:8 (cf. Rev. 21:27).* *This book would appear to be the place wherein the names of redeemed individuals have been inscribed rather than the book of life in Rev. 3:5; 20:12.*

The book of life will be opened at the judgments of both the saved and the unsaved. The entire scene in Rev. 3:5 has to do with issues of the judgment seat of Christ, with the book of life being the ONLY book from God’s library of books singled out and mentioned by name.

The same thing can be found in the judgment of the unsaved dead in Rev. 20:11-15. *The book of life ALONE is singled out and mentioned by name.*

The purpose and content of *the book of life* are clearly revealed in Rev. 20:12: “...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

The book of life is a book, among other books, *containing the deeds/works of individuals*, both those of the saved and those of the unsaved; and from the emphasis placed upon the book of life in connection with both judgments, along with information concerning other books in Scripture, *one could conclude that this is probably God’s primary record book containing the deeds/works of every individual.*

Other books also record *deeds/works*, such as those mentioned in Ps. 56:8 and Mal. 3:16.

But the primary record book in this realm, one in which a name can be retained or blotted out (depending on the record of that individual contained in the book), appears to be “the book of life.”

The blotting of one’s name *out of the book of life* in Rev. 3:5 is strictly for the non-overcomer, *with the Messianic Era in view, and has NOTHING to do with eternal verities.*

One’s relationship to Christ *can ONLY be looked upon as a settled, closed matter prior to judgment, a matter which can NEVER enter into any future judgment in any fashion or form.*

Different companies of the saved are judged at different times, with their works in view (works recorded in a book, or books [Ezek. 20:34-38; Matt. 25:34-40; I Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 20:4-6]); and the unsaved are judged at a subsequent time, with their works in view as well (works also recorded in a book, or books [Rev. 20:11-15]).

There is NO such thing in Scripture as a judgment of the saved and a judgment of the unsaved occurring together at the same time; NOR is there any such thing in Scripture as the issue of one’s eternal salvation or eternal damnation being brought up at any future judgment.

Judgment in this respect, for both the saved and the unsaved, *occurred in past time; and this past judgment can NEVER be brought up as an issue again.*

All future judgments will be based *strictly upon the works of those being judged, which renders it impossible for issues surrounding eternal verities to ever enter into these judgments.*

Relative to the saved, judgment has already occurred, based on *their belief and Christ’s finished work*; relative to the unsaved, judgment, as well, has already occurred, based on *their unbelief and Christ’s finished work*:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned already [‘has already been judged’], because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

The book of life contains records *that have been lived*, and the blotting of a Christian’s name out of this book *follows* his judgment on the basis of that which has been recorded in the book *and involves millennial verities ALONE*.

Such a Christian will be shown, *on the basis of his own works* (works burned at the judgment seat), to have been overcome; and he will suffer loss — the loss of his soul/life. *Rather than his name being left intact, it will be blotted out of the book of life; and he will be among those DENIED positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.*

And the converse of the preceding will, as well, be true for the faithful Christian shown, in that future day, to have overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. *His name will be retained in the book of life, and he will be among those OCCUPYING positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.*

Confession or Denial

Christ, in Rev. 3:5, has extended a twofold promise *concerning the name of the properly-clothed overcomer in Sardis (“clothed in white raiment”)* in that coming day:

1) *“I will NOT [a double negative in the Greek text, showing emphasis: ‘I most certainly will NOT’] blot out his name out of the book of life.”*

2) *“But I will CONFESS his name before my Father, and before his angels.”*

This will occur in heaven *following* issues of the judgment seat, for the person whose name is to be confessed *MUST first be shown to have overcome through the record contained in the*

book of life (and possibly other books as well).

Christ referred to *this future event (along with the negative aspect [denial of a confession of his name, resulting from his name having been blotted out of the book of life])* on at least two occasions during His earthly ministry (Matt. 10:32, 33; Luke 12:8, 9).

The verses in Matthew refer to *confession or denial before "my Father which is in heaven,"* and the verses in Luke refer to *confession or denial before "the angels of God."*

The thought of one's name having previously been blotted out of the book of life is not seen in these passages from the two gospel accounts, *though it is seen when Scripture is compared with Scripture (these two passages compared with the message to the Church in Sardis).*

Further, in the Book of Matthew, this matter appears in a context referring to the salvation or loss of one's soul (vv. 38, 39; cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

Thus, this places the entire matter, as in Rev. 3:5, in connection with events surrounding findings and determinations at the judgment seat.

Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, calls attention to the same thing (2:10-13); and the contextual setting *has to do with a future salvation, the glory of Christ, and the coming reign of Christ:*

"Therefore I endure ['patiently endure'] all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the *salvation* which is in Christ Jesus with *eternal* ['with age-lasting'] *glory*.

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

If we suffer ['patiently endure' (same word in the Greek text as in v. 10)], we shall also *reign* with him: *if we deny him* [deny Him relative to our patiently enduring], *he also will deny us* [deny us relative to a place in His reign].

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

Note that verse thirteen refers to the fact that Christ **CANNOT** accept as faithful an individual who has proven himself unfaithful. To do so would be to deny His Own character, whether seen through statements in the written Word or actions of the living Word.

And the converse of that could only be true as well. Christ can **ONLY** accept as faithful an individual who has proven himself faithful.

Again, to do otherwise would be to deny His Own character, whether seen through statements in the written Word or actions of the living Word.

Christ MUST remain faithful to do EXACTLY what He has said that He would do concerning confession or denial of Christians before His Father and before His Father's angels.

Thus, the parallel Scriptures to the confession of one's name before the Father and before His angels, as revealed in Rev. 3:5, *have to do with Two things: confessing Christ before men, and patiently enduring.* And it is within these two realms that the entire matter is set forth.

Confessing Christ before men has NOTHING to do with a public confession of one's faith in Christ at the point of salvation, as is often taught.

Rather, such a confession is for *those who are already saved*, and this confession will be a natural outworking in the life of one exercising faithfulness to his calling. Confession or denial of Christians *by Christ in heaven, during that coming day, is conditioned upon their overcoming or being overcome and has the coming Messianic Era in view.*

And confession or denial of Christ *by Christians here upon the earth, during the present time, should be looked upon as having the same end in view, though this is seldom the case.*

There is a life to be lived, and the unfolding of this life under the leadership of the Lord should bring praise, honor, and glory to the Lord, as the individual looks out ahead

toward events at the judgment seat and the reign of Christ which follows.

Patiently enduring, within its context in II Tim. 2:12, MUST be understood in the light of Paul's patient endurance in verse ten.

He patiently endured ALL things for the sake of other Christians in order that they might obtain the salvation having to do with age-lasting glory, ultimately occupying a position with Christ in the kingdom.

The record of Paul's life (now recorded in the book of life, awaiting the opening of this book at the judgment seat) was one of his concern for others, with the coming kingdom of Christ in view.

For the sake of other Christians, Paul let NOTHING stand in his way.

And Christians today are to govern their lives in a comparable manner, with the SAME end in view, as they too patiently endure ALL things.

Concluding Thoughts:

Decisions and determinations concerning *receiving rewards or suffering loss* will emanate out of issues surrounding the judgment seat, and the realization of these decisions and determinations will be brought to pass in "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ."

God has offered *rewards* for faithfulness; and Christians are exhorted to "strive [Gk., *agonizomai*, from which the English word "agonize" is derived, *i.e.*, 'exert every possible effort']" in the present race of the faith, with rewards in view, while moving toward the goal of their calling (*cf.* Luke 13:24; I Cor. 9:25; I Tim. 6:12).

"Rewards" are offered *as compensations in order to encourage Christians as they are being tested and tried while engaged in the Lord's business during the time of their present pilgrim journey.*

And compensations of this nature are NOT to be taken lightly. Disdaining, ignoring, or neglecting proffered rewards is completely out of line with any Scriptural presentation of this subject.

The mother of James and John possessed Godly aspirations for her two sons concerning future rewards, James and John themselves possessed the same aspirations, the other disciples in like manner possessed such aspirations, and Christians are exhorted to also possess aspirations of this nature (Matt. 19:27-30; 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; I Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 1:17, 18; I Tim. 6:11, 12; II Tim. 4:7, 8; Titus 2:12, 13; II Peter 1:10, 11).

A day is coming in the near future when every Christian will be called to an accounting. *Lives lived* will be reviewed from the records which the righteous Judge will have on hand. When the books containing records of the deeds/works of Christians are opened, there will be a just recompense on the basis of that which is revealed.

EVERY Christian will be judged SOLELY on the basis of the things written in these books, and the entire matter will be carried out in an equitable, just manner.

Receiving rewards or suffering loss will, in each instance, be commensurate with revealed works. There will be NO exceptions.

The Christians' deeds/works, emanating from faithfulness or unfaithfulness, will come under scrutiny through being subjected to fire. Some works will be revealed as comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones" and endure the fire; other works though will be revealed as comparable to "wood, hay, stubble" and be consumed by the fire.

Christians with works enduring the fire will receive rewards and positions in the kingdom.

BUT, Christians with works consumed by the fire will suffer loss and be denied positions in the kingdom.

Such will be the outcome of the judgment of ALL Christians at the end of this dispensation, preceding the Messianic Era.

13

A Pillar, A City

I Will Keep... I Will Write...

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

If the message to the Church in Philadelphia is to be looked upon as referring to a particular period in Church history, it could only be placed during a time which began in the nineteenth century and extended to the end of the dispensation. Then, the succeeding message to the Church in Laodicea would cover the same time as well.

Both messages form continuations of two segments of Christendom referred to in the message to the preceding Church, the Church in Sardis (those with undefiled garments, and those with a name that they lived but were dead).

The message to the Church in Philadelphia constitutes a continuation of the former segment (those with undefiled garments); and the message to the Church in Laodicea constitutes a continuation of the latter segment (those with a name that they lived but were dead)

And BOTH would extend to the end of the dispensation.

BUT, as evident from Scriptures such as Matt. 13:33 and Luke 18:8, along with the arrangement of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, that segment of Christendom represented by the Church in Philadelphia could ONLY continue in a diminishing manner.

This segment of Christendom could ONLY progressively be engulfed by that segment of Christendom represented by the Church in Laodicea.

The status of *Christians ALONE* is in view in the messages to the seven Churches; and *the condition* in which Christians find themselves, as viewed in these messages, is *ALWAYS* brought about by *WORKS*.

In this respect, *the reference to a condition described by the word "dead" could only refer to a spiritually destitute condition brought about by the absence of acceptable WORKS, which in James 2:14-26 is associated with a DEAD faith.*

Such individuals in the Church in Sardis *MUST* be looked upon in an opposite sense to those in the same Church who had not defiled their garments.

Thus, the word "dead" could be equated with *defiled*; and in the message to the Church in Laodicea, *the SAME condition* is described another way by the word *naked* (vv. 17, 18).

The "white raiment" is also in view in the message to the Church in Laodicea (as in the message to the Church in Sardis); and those described as "naked" *were said to be in a position (i.e., saved, "in Christ") wherein they would have been ABLE to array themselves in "white raiment," through WORKS (as were their counterparts in Sardis), a position which could NEVER be held by an unsaved person because of his alienated position outside of Christ* (vv. 15, 18; cf. Rev. 19:7, 8).

The Church in Philadelphia is mentioned first, calling attention *to an open door* set before those who had exercised *patient endurance* through the trials and testings of this life ("patience" [v. 10] should be translated "patient endurance" [Gk. *hupomone*]).

The full fruition of the work of the reformers and those who followed in their steps appears to be in view in the message to the Church in Philadelphia; and such a fruition *could ONLY refer to the condition in which the Church, for*

the first time following the Reformation, found itself during the nineteenth century.

Two things marked the activities of Christians during those days:

1) Worldwide missionary activity, paralleled only by the missionary activity of Christians during the first century of the Church's existence.

2) A restoration of the great truths surrounding Christ's return, seen in the first-century Church.

If matters are viewed in this respect, *the open door* may relate to the former and *the patient endurance* to the latter.

The planting and watering would have been carried out by the sixteenth century reformers and those who followed in their steps during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

But the forthcoming *increase* which God would give awaited the Church during the nineteenth century (*cf.* I Cor. 3:5-7).

Missionary endeavor became a major activity of the Church in the sixteenth century, and there was a beginning of the restoration of prophetic truth during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the full fruition of the entire matter was not seen until the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, God raised up great missionary-minded individuals who entered into the labors of the reformers and those following in their steps, taking advantage of open doors in countries worldwide; and during this same time, God raised up great prophetic students who built upon the work of their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors.

God continued to raise up great missionary-minded individuals and great prophetic students for over one hundred years, extending well into the twentieth century.

But then events took a different course. Mission doors around the world began to close, and, correspondingly, the ranks of the great teachers of prophecy began to diminish.

In this respect, there is an evident connection between the Church being allowed to involve itself in great missionary activity and the ministry of the prophetic word. Such a connection existed at the beginning of the dispensation, and such has also existed near the end of the dispensation.

The terminus of the matter though has, for the past few decades, been rapidly *moving more and more away from* that sphere of activity typified by the Philadelphian Church and *moving more and more toward* that sphere of activity typified by the Laodicean Church.

The deteriorating effect produced by the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 *could ONLY cause the Laodicean Church to become more and more prominent UNTIL, for all practical purposes, that seen in this Church ALONE would prevail at the end of the dispensation.*

(For more information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *Till the Whole Was Leavened*).

The Hour of Temptation

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

The words “hour of temptation” in Rev. 3:10 are taken by numerous Bible students *to be a reference to the coming Tribulation period*, with the promise being given in the message to the Church in Philadelphia that Christians will not enter into this time.

The word “from” is a translation of the Greek word “ek,” meaning “out of,” “from within.” Thus, a better translation would be, “I also will keep thee *out of* the hour of temptation...”

And many Bible students, seeing “the hour of temptation” as a reference to the coming Tribulation period, see this verse as a reference to the rapture, a promise that Christians *will be kept out of this time, out of the Tribulation*. That is, they see this verse as a promise to Christians that they will be removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.

In turn, this has also led many Bible students to follow a *selective rapture ideology*, for all Christians *are NOT* included in this promise. Note that *ONLY those who have kept the word of His patience* have been promised that they will be kept “*out of the hour of temptation...*”

Thus, if this verse centers around a promise that Christians will be removed before the coming Tribulation, then a major problem exists, for a teaching of this nature would be in direct conflict with that which Scripture reveals concerning the rapture. Scripture is quite clear from both the Old Testament types and the New Testament antitype that the rapture will be *ALL-inclusive*. *ALL Christians will be removed at this time, NOT just those who have kept the word of His patience*.

The Tribulation comprises the last seven years of Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. And, accordingly, this period of time has to do with seven years which will complete God’s dealings with Israel during the preceding dispensation.

This preceding dispensation was interrupted seven years short of completion. Israel’s sin had reached an apex (at Calvary); and God stepped in, stopped the chronometer marking off time for the dispensation, and instituted a new dispensation. Israel was set aside, and fifty-three days following the events surrounding Calvary, God sent His Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son.

God, at this time, through events beginning on the day of Pentecost, called into existence *one new man* (which was neither Jew nor Gentile); and the Spirit began His search for the bride among those comprising *this new man*, a search which would last for one dispensation, for 2,000 years.

Once the Spirit has completed His search, *this new man* (comprised of all Christians) will be removed from the earth and dealt with at Christ's judgment seat in the heavens. And the results of the Spirit's preceding 2,000-year search will be made known.

From decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat, the bride will be revealed. The "called out" will be removed from the "called" (*cf.* Matt.22:14; II Peter 2:10).

THEN, once this has been accomplished, God will turn back to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation during Man's Day, completing the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

THIS will complete Man's 6,000-year Day.

Christ will *THEN* return, deal with and restore Israel, overthrow Gentile world power, and the 1,000-year Messianic Era will be ushered in.

Revelation 3:10 really has *NOTHING* to do with either the rapture or the Tribulation. Both are dealt with in the Book of Revelation, showing a pre-Tribulation rapture of all Christians. *BUT, NEITHER the rapture NOR the Tribulation is dealt with in this verse.*

In Fact, it would be COMPLETELY out of place to deal with the rapture anywhere within the structure of the messages to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3.

The rapture is dealt with in Rev. 1:10a; 4:1, 2a, and the Tribulation is dealt with in Rev. 6-19a. *And the messages to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3, continuing from the foundational scene in chapter one, FOLLOWING the rapture (vv. 10b-16), has to do with Christians before the judgment seat.*

Revelation 3:10, within context, has to do with *WORKS emanating out of FAITHFULNESS* (cf. James 2:14-26), with a view to *OVERCOMING* (cf. vv. 8, 10a, 12). And the Christians in Philadelphia were promised that, because of their faithfulness, *they would be kept OUT OF a particular time of testing/trials — about to come upon “all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”*

This promised *deliverance could ONLY* be the same as that seen in what is commonly called “the Lord’s prayer” in Matt. 6:9-13: “And lead us not into temptation, but *deliver us from evil [lit., ‘from the evil one’ — from Satan]...*” (v. 13a). This would be the same temptation which Christ spoke of in Mark 14:38 and which Paul wrote about in I Cor. 7:5. And it is the same temptation from which the Lord promised *deliverance* in II Peter 2:9.

Testings or trials are seen in Scripture within two spheres. They are seen as something which God uses in connection with the maturing process, with a view to *the person ultimately being approved at the judgment seat* (James 1:2-4, 12); and they are seen as something which *Satan uses in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian’s life* (Mark 14:38; James 1:13-15).

The promise concerning *deliverance in Rev. 3:10 would have to be understood within this overall frame of reference, in keeping with Christ’s statement to His disciples in Matt. 6:13.*

This “temptation [‘trial,’ ‘testing’]” by Satan *was about to* (literal rendering from the Greek text) come upon “all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The fact that this testing would be worldwide is another thing which has led many individuals to believe that the coming Tribulation was in view. *But, NOT so. Christians are being dealt with, NOT the world at large; and the expression, “all the world,” MUST be understood in the same sense as it is used in Col. 1:5ff, where Christians ALONE are also in view.*

In Col. 1:5, 6, 23, Paul states that the gospel (his gospel, the good news surrounding the mystery which had been revealed to him) had been proclaimed throughout “all the world,” “to every creature which is under heaven.” However, the message in this gospel, in Paul’s gospel — “if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (v. 23) — *was for Christians ALONE. The content of the message restricts this good news to Christians, allowing for ONLY one understanding of the passage.*

“To every creature which is under heaven” *can ONLY* be a reference to Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, *NOT* to unsaved individuals in the world as well.

And the extent of the promise surrounding deliverance from a coming time of testing/trials in Rev. 3:10 is the same.

This is a promise *to faithful Christians* relative to a time of testing/trials which Satan would bring upon Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, *seeking to bring about their defeat.*

They, because of their faithfulness, would overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, through this means, they would be delivered out of the onslaughts of Satan, as seen in Rev. 3:10.

And the context of this verse *is in complete keeping with this thought, NOT with thoughts surrounding the rapture.* Efforts to use Rev. 3:10 as a verse relating to the rapture *can ONLY have one end result, which is negative.* Such efforts *can ONLY serve to do away with that which actually is dealt with in this verse — a facet of teaching surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.*

There is an abundance of Scripture — in both the Old Testament and the New Testament — to show that the complete Church will be removed prior to the Tribulation.

And, with this in mind, *one need NOT attempt to make Rev. 3:10 deal with something that it doesn't deal with*, in an effort to teach that which is clearly taught so many places elsewhere in Scripture, even elsewhere in the Book of Revelation itself.

Behold, I Come Quickly

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

The Greek word translated “quickly” (*tachu*) is used six times in the Book of Revelation referring to the coming of the Lord for His saints (2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). This word, within its context in these passages, *can ONLY refer to the suddenness or swiftness of an event coming at a completely unexpected time for many, though others will be watching and waiting.*

This would be a continuation of thought from the previous verse relative to *patient endurance under trials and testings*. Individuals are exhorted to hold onto *that which they have*, for a revealed reason which both precedes and follows the exhortation. *That which they have*, contextually, *can ONLY have to do with the END result of patient endurance (v. 10) — occupying REGAL positions with Christ in His kingdom (v. 11b).*

That which is in view in Rev. 3:11 has to do with the *sudden, swift* nature of the Lord's return. This is a parallel passage to that seen in I Thess. 5:1-9.

Some Christians will be watching and some will not be watching when the Lord returns in this manner. Some will have patiently endured, holding fast that which they had. Others though will not have done so.

And the END result will have to do with EITHER occupying OR being denied a position with Christ in His kingdom.

The suddenness or swiftness of Christ's return is described in I Cor. 15:52 by the use of the Greek word *atomos*, translated "moment." (Our English word "atom" is simply a transliterated form of *atomos*.)

When associated with *time*, as in I Cor. 15:52, *atomos* refers to the smallest, most minute unit into which time can be divided (*e.g.*, hours are divided into minutes, minutes are divided into seconds, and seconds are divided into fractions such as a millisecond [one-thousandth of a second], or a microsecond [one-millionth of a second]).

And there are divisions beyond a microsecond.

Events surrounding Christ's return for His saints will occur within the scope of a unit of time lasting less than a microsecond — so *sudden* and *swift* that it will be beyond all finite comprehension. And the warning to Christians concerning *the unexpected nature* of this event occurs numerous places in Scripture (*cf.* Matt. 24:45-51; 25:10-13, 24-30; Luke 12:42-46; 13:24-30; 19:20-26).

Christians being removed from this world (removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in the Lord's Day in heaven) is really *NOT* the main thrust of the matter though. Interpreters have too often erroneously sought to make it so.

The main thrust of the matter has to do with *the Christians' present manner of living (patient endurance) in view of the sudden, unexpected nature of the Lord's return ("Behold, I come quickly [suddenly, swiftly]") and that which will be brought to light following His return ("Hold that fast which thou hast that NO man take thy crown")*.

Christians, in actuality, will be removed from the earth preceding a judgment befalling the earth-dwellers, with a view to their appearance before the judgment seat of Christ in the heavens; and it is at this judgment that all decisions and determinations concerning *the present proffered crowns* will be made.

Revelation 3:11 anticipates these events at the judgment seat following the removal of Christians from the earth. And, as previously shown, *Rev. 3:10, leading into verse eleven, deals, NOT with the rapture, BUT with the same subject matter seen in verse eleven, providing introductory material for this verse.*

“Crowns” have to do with REGAL power and authority.

Rulers are the ones who wear crowns, and crowns are presently being offered to Christians *in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.*

Christ will wear a crown in that day, and all who rule with Christ will likewise wear crowns.

There will be NO such thing as an uncrowned Christian occupying a position as co-heir with Christ during the day of His power.

These positions of power and authority are REAL, the proffered crowns are REAL, and the warnings concerning the possibility of a forfeiture of these crowns are just as REAL.

The Overcomers

Thoughts from verses ten and eleven concerning faithfulness in view of the Lord’s return, the judgment seat, and the reign of Christ, lead directly into the overcomer’s promise in verse twelve.

This promise has several interrelated parts and brings matters introduced in the preceding verses to their climax. Those who *patiently endure* during the present time will be shown (through the issues of the judgment seat) to have overcome, they will receive crowns, and they will occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.

The overcomer’s promise to the Church in Philadelphia *describes certain things about the nature of these positions; and, for the FIRST and ONLY time in the overcomer’s promises, reference is made to the CITY from which Christians will conduct this rule.*

1) Pillars in the Temple

The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia that he will be made a “pillar in the temple” is, of course, a figure of speech. “Christ” is *the temple* in one respect (Rev. 21:22); and in another respect, Christ is presently building a temple.

The temple presently under construction is being built with “living stones [Christians, who themselves are temples (temples of the Holy Spirit)]” (I Peter 2:5; cf. Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19).

The figurative use of “pillar” in Rev. 3:12 *MUST*, for the spiritual lessons being drawn, refer back to that which is literal; and for these spiritual lessons it seems apparent that the reference can only be to “Solomon’s temple,” where special, specific reference is made *to pillars in the temple*.

(The only other temple built during Old Testament days was “Zerubbabel’s temple,” built following the Babylonian captivity. Centuries later, following a reconstructing process, beginning under Herod the Great, this temple became known as “Herod’s temple”; and this is the temple which was destroyed in 70 A.D.)

The grandeur of Solomon’s temple so far overshadowed the grandeur of Zerubbabel’s temple that the latter was looked upon as “nothing” in comparison to the former [Haggai 2:3].)

The son of David, Solomon, built a temple for the Lord; and the greater Son of David, Christ, is presently building a temple.

Revelation concerning the construction of the former has been given in such a manner that great spiritual truths can be drawn pertaining to the construction of the latter. The prophets recorded far more than just Jewish history. Their writings, recorded under the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit, are fraught with significance and meaning.

When Solomon built the temple following his ascension to the throne, he had a worker of brass from Tyre construct two massive pillars for the porch. Solomon named one of these pillars "Jachin," meaning *establish*; and he named the other pillar "Boaz," meaning *strength* (I Kings 7:13-21).

The overcomers in Philadelphia were promised future positions with Christ which appear to be described by the meanings of the names given to the two pillars in Solomon's temple.

The promise to the overcomers that they would "go no more out" refers to their fixed position as pillars in the temple; and with the two massive pillars in Solomon's temple in view, saying that overcoming Christians will be placed in the position of pillars in the temple is saying that these Christians will occupy *sure, secure, firmly established* positions of *strength* and *power*. And positions of this nature, in complete accordance with Rev. 3:12, *will be realized when they rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom*.

The manner in which Christians will conduct themselves during that coming day should be thought of in the same sense as the manner in which Christ will conduct Himself.

In the words of the psalmist, Christ, during His rule over the nations, will "break them with a rod of iron" and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2:8, 9); and in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Thyatira, Christians are promised that their coming rule will be conducted after the same fashion:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he [the overcoming Christian] shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26, 27).

The position which Christians are to occupy today is, in many respects, diametrically opposed to the position which Christians are to occupy during the coming age. Matt. 5:5 states, "Blessed are *the meek* [present]: for they shall *inherit the earth* [future]."

The word "meek" refers to one's present manner of living, in view of a future inheritance. This word has to do with being "gentle," "humble," or "unassuming" as one patiently endures the trials and testings of life.

The same word is used in Matt. 21:5 relative to Christ at the time He rode into Jerusalem as Israel's *King, anticipating His rejection and crucifixion*:

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

This verse is a fulfillment of Zech. 9:9, where the word "lowly" is used in the translation rather than "meek."

"Lowly" is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning *poor* or *afflicted*, and this word refers to the position Christ assumed on our behalf. He Who was rich became poor that we, *through Him*, might be made rich (II Cor. 8:9).

The sufferings of Isaiah chapter fifty-three are in view, *but these sufferings do NOT stand alone; the glory MUST follow the sufferings, as the day follows the night* (Luke 24:26; Heb. 12:2; II Peter 3:7-13).

When Christ was upon earth the first time, appearing to Israel as *the meek* or *lowly One*, He allowed the governing Gentile power of that day to array Him as a mock King. He was clothed in purple, crowned with a wreath made from thorns, and given a reed for a sceptre. He was then mocked, spat upon, and smitten (Matt. 27:27-31).

He, the One destined to break the nations with a rod of iron, ALLOWED this to happen.

WHY? Simply because it was NOT time for Him to take the sceptre.

This occurred during the time of His sufferings and humiliation, which was during the Times of the Gentiles (the interval during which Gentile nations hold the sceptre); and *NOT ONLY MUST events surrounding His sufferings and humiliation (past) be fulfilled, BUT the Times of the Gentiles (presently continuing) MUST be fulfilled as well before Christ can come into His glory.*

Christ remained in a completely “unassuming, gentle, humble” state while being persecuted unjustly at the time of His first coming.

However, the day is coming when He will return and be seen by the world after an entirely different fashion.

He will *THEN* be seated upon a “white horse” rather than an “ass,” and He *WILL* come forth to “judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11ff).

The words “meek” or “lowly” *will NOT fit His character at all in that day, for He WILL take the sceptre and break the nations* (cf. Ps. 2:6-9; 110:2-5; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45).

In this light, Christians, as *partakers* with Christ (I Peter 4:12, 13; cf. Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:12), are to conduct their affairs (both present and future) after the same manner in which Christ conducted and will conduct His affairs (both past and future).

The government of the earth, continuing under Gentile dominion, is *NO more* the Christians’ concern during the present time than it was Christ’s concern when He was upon earth almost two millenniums ago.

Christians *are NOT* to hold the sceptre today. Rather, they are to assume the same position relative to world government which Christ assumed.

They are to patiently endure the trials and testings of life in an “unassuming, humble, gentle” spirit; and if called upon

to so do, they are to continue in this manner through any unjust treatment which God may allow to befall His people, *looking forward to ANOTHER DAY — the day when Christians, with Christ, will hold the sceptre and break the nations.*

2) Engravings on the Pillars

Christ returning to the earth at the termination of the Tribulation, as the conquering King, will put down all power and authority. He will have “on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords”; and He will possess a “new name” which no man will know (Rev. 3:12; 19:12, 16).

In the ancient world, the columns of cities were often inscribed with the names of conquerors, and this appears to be the thought in Rev. 3:12. Christ will inscribe upon the pillars of the temple (upon overcoming [conquering] Christians) three things:

- 1) “The name of my God.”
- 2) “The name of the city of my God...new Jerusalem.”
- 3) “My new name.”

This will be brought to pass after Christ puts down all present ruling powers/authorities and assumes, with His co-heirs, governmental control over the earth.

At that time Christians will be intimately identified, after the fashion revealed in Rev. 3:12, with God the Father, God the Son, and the new Jerusalem. And they will then exercise sure, secure, firmly established positions of strength and power as they rule with the Son from the new Jerusalem.

It seems evident that the new Jerusalem will be a satellite city of the earth during the coming age. Overcoming Christians, along with a select group of Old Testament and Tribulation saints (those who qualified to rule from the

heavens), along with possibly believing Jews at the time of the offer and re-offer of the kingdom (at and following Christ's first coming), will dwell in this city.

This, however, is *ONLY* for the coming age.

Once the present heavens and earth have been destroyed and the new heavens and the new earth have been brought into existence (II Peter 3:7-14; Rev. 21, 22), the new Jerusalem will rest upon the new earth and so remain throughout the unending cycle of ages which will then ensue. And during these ages, the new Jerusalem will continue to be the dwelling place of a segment of the redeemed and continue as the center of governmental power and authority.

The new Jerusalem is described in Rev. 21:9-21, with additional information concerning the city and its inhabitants given in the verses following (21:22-22:21).

This city measures about fifteen hundred miles in length, in breadth, and in height; it is constructed of "pure gold, like unto clear glass"; and a wall over two hundred feet high, constructed of "jasper" (with "twelve gates" constructed of "twelve pearls," resting on foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones), surrounds the city. Certain things are also stated concerning the "street" of the city, the "temple" in the city, the "light" for the city, the "tree of life," and a "pure river of water of life."

The fact that the length, breadth, and height of the new Jerusalem are equal should not lead one to conclude that the city has been constructed in the shape of a cube, with possibly numerous tiers or levels to the city within the cube.

No geometric shape is given in Scripture; and it would seem to be more in keeping with that which is revealed to think of the new Jerusalem in the same sense as walled cities in the Middle East down through history, with one exception — the possibility of an elevated central point (elevated to equal the length and breadth), housing the

center of government (allowing matters to remain as they have always existed in God's universal government, *a rule from the heavens over a domain*).

Many things seem to fit much better by viewing the city after this fashion (*e.g.*, the wall surrounding the city, the gates to the city, the street in the city, and the river flowing out from the throne of God, appear to depict the city built on a single level [Rev. 21:17-21; 22:1, 2]).

Another thing which should be understood about the new Jerusalem is the fact that this city was brought into existence either prior to or during the days of Abraham (Heb. 11:16) and has, since that time, been associated with *Abraham and his seed*.

The seed of Abraham in the Old Testament, to whom heavenly promises and blessings pertained, were *the lineal descendants of Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons*. And the seed of Abraham, to whom these same heavenly promises and blessings pertain today, are *Christians* (Gal. 3:16-18, 26-29; *cf.* Gen. 22:17, 18; Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

BUT, in reality, Abraham and a segment of his seed from both dispensations will ultimately enter into the proffered heavenly promises and blessings.

(Though the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to a new nation — *the one new man* “in Christ,” comprised of Christians [*cf.* Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10] — *certain Old Testament saints aspired to and qualified to occupy heavenly positions in the theocracy prior to that time when the kingdom was taken from Israel.*

And the nation of Israel, forfeiting the right to rule from heavenly places in later years, *CANNOT do away with the promises made to these Old Testament saints*. Regardless of that which the nation did at Christ's first coming, *these Old Testament saints WILL realize that which has been promised to them* [*cf.* Heb. 11:7ff].

THEN, note promises made to believing Jews during and following Christ's first coming, during the offer and re-offer of "the kingdom of the heavens" to Israel. These believing Jews would be in EXACTLY the same position as believing Jews during O.T. days — a believing part of an unbelieving nation.)

The "place" presently being prepared for Christians in John 14:2, 3 has *NOTHING* to do with a supposed present construction of the new Jerusalem. In the "Father's house are many mansions [*lit.*, 'abiding places']," and Christ has gone into heaven to "prepare a place" for Christians *in the Father's house*.

The new Jerusalem *is a city IN the Father's house, NOT the Father's house*. His "house" includes *ALL under His sovereign control*, and in the broadest sense of the word would include the entire universe.

However, Biblical revelation concerns itself with *this earth*; and Christ going away "to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return" relates itself *to governmental control over the earth*.

The "place" which Christ has gone away to prepare for Christians *is a position with Him in THIS kingdom*.

Overcoming Christians *in that coming day will dwell in the new Jerusalem and occupy their place with Christ upon His throne, in complete accordance with that which is revealed in the overcomer's promise in Rev. 3:12*.

14

Seated on the Throne Christ and His Co-Heirs Together

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:20, 21).

The FIRST thing that a person MUST get fixed in his mind when studying the message to the Church in Laodicea is the fact that the Spirit of God is addressing Christians.

The unsaved are NOT in view at all; they CANNOT be in view. This message is to a Church (vv. 14-22), and the New Testament knows NOTHING about unsaved individuals having a part in the formation of a Church (i.e., saved and unsaved together).

WORKS, with a view to either overcoming or being overcome, are seen throughout the passage. And, with spiritual values involved, this is a realm into which the unsaved CANNOT enter.

And it is the same with the structure of each of the other six messages to the six Churches preceding the message to the Church in Laodicea.

In this respect, the Church in Laodicea is *NO different* than the Church in Philadelphia, or any of the other Churches. *ALL seven messages are to Christians ALONE, to those “in Christ”; and ALL have to do with WORKS, resulting in Christians either overcoming or being overcome.*

Too many people deal with certain problems which arise in the Christian life in a rather loose manner. When, for example, sin manifests itself in the life of a Christian, one of the most common ways which other Christians often deal with the matter is to begin questioning the person's salvation.

The thought often centers around the premise that if a person is saved he will follow a certain course of action; and if he doesn't follow this course of action, his conduct reveals that he was never really saved in the first place.

This type thinking though *is completely contrary* to any Scriptural teaching on salvation by grace through faith. *It is a corruption of the pure gospel of the grace of God, for works have been introduced into a realm where works CANNOT exist* (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 11:6).

A person can NO more show by his works (any type actions on his part) that he has been saved than he can perform works to be saved in the first place. Works CANNOT enter after any fashion, either preceding or following the time a person is saved.

A person CANNOT perform works to be saved.

A person CANNOT perform works to stay saved.

And a person CANNOT perform works to show that he has been saved.

Salvation is by grace through faith apart from works, and it MUST forever so remain. As in Jonah 2:9, "Salvation is of the Lord" (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5).

The Church in Laodicea is described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

This description applies to a group of "lukewarm" Christians that Christ is about to "spue ['vomit']" out of His "mouth ['stomach']" (vv. 15-17). The scene within that portion of Christendom depicted by the Church in Laodicea, in this respect, is one portrayed as producing sickness to the very stomach.

These Christians had been called into existence with the things of the coming age in view. But, instead of following their “calling” and looking out ahead to being among the “called out,” they had prostituted their high calling, *with only ONE thing awaiting them. They, in the descriptive language of Scripture, would be vomited out of Christ’s stomach.*

Being vomited out of the stomach *has NO reference to eternal verities, for such are NOT in view.* The message is to those who already possess eternal life, *and it is life for the coming age ALONE which is in view.*

The scene in these verses describes that which will occur at the judgment seat of Christ, with Christians standing *naked and ashamed* in the presence of Christ (v. 18). Such Christians will be rejected for positions with Christ on the throne, with the attitude which Christ exhibits toward their revealed works expressed in very vivid language.

However, there is another side to the picture presented in these verses. Despite the attitude of such Christians as set forth in the message to the Church in Laodicea, Christ still extends an invitation for them to “repent.”

They have forsaken Him; *BUT, He has NOT forsaken them.*

Christ still holds out before them proffered crowns, necessary for positions on the throne with Him in that coming day.

It is NOT too late for them to buy “gold tried in the fire” (that they might be rich), clothe themselves in “white raiment” (that the shame of their nakedness *might NOT be manifested*), and anoint their “eyes with eyesalve” (that they might see).

Christ stands at the door of the lukewarm Church of today and knocks, as He stood at the door of the Laodicean Church in Revelation chapter three after the same fashion; and the invitation to the individual Christian within the Church — whether in the Laodicean Church then, or the Laodicean Church of today — *is the same:*

“...if *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come ‘in to him” [NOT come ‘into that individual,’ BUT come ‘inside the Church to that individual’], and will sup with him, and he with me” (v. 20b; cf. vv. 18, 19).

The End, Goal

The present dispensation will one day end, be brought to a close; and Scripture presents the Church at the termination of this dispensation in a dual respect. The messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea present these two facets within Christendom, forming God’s Own commentary concerning the concluding period of Church history, *with the Church in Laodicea becoming MORE and MORE prominent as the age nears its completion.*

There will always be faithful Christians, extending right on up to the time of the rapture. God will always have a faithful remnant (cf. I Kings 19:14, 18; Rev. 11:3ff), a witness on earth, seen by the presence of the Church in Philadelphia. But Christendom, by large — the Church as a whole, foreshadowed by the Church in Laodicea — will, for all practical purposes, *stand ALONE* as the Church in the world at the end of the dispensation.

1) *Beginning and Working of the Matter in History*

As seen in previous chapters dealing with the seven Churches in Asia during John’s day, *there is an event in Church history which precipitated conditions as they exist today, almost two millenniums later.*

And that event was the placing of leaven in the three measures of meal by the woman in Matt. 13:33.

Once this act had been accomplished, which appears to have occurred very early in the history of the Church, *the end of the matter was SET.* The leaven would work in the meal “till the whole was leavened.”

And this working of the leaven would ultimately result in conditions existing in the Church at the conclusion of the dispensation which would parallel those existing in the first century Church in Laodicea. The whole of Christendom, aside from isolated instances, would become leavened, become Laodicean.

“Leaven,” as it is used in Scripture, *ALWAYS has to do with that which is “evil,” “vile,” “corrupt.”*

The Israelites, immediately following the Passover, were told to “put away leaven” out of their houses (Ex. 12:14-20); Jesus told His disciples to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6).

And Christians are told, “Purge out therefore the old leaven” (I Cor. 5:7), with an allusion made in the following verse (v. 8) to the feast of unleavened bread in Exodus chapter twelve (showing a type-antitype arrangement of the teaching set forth).

The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 was destined to ultimately corrupt the entire mass.

And this is *EXACTLY* the climactic time we are nearing (or, seemingly are already at) in Church history today. *The whole* is to be permeated by the working of the leaven, and the message to the Church in Laodicea *shows the end result.*

Leaven actually works best in a place *where the temperature is not too hot nor too cold, and the lukewarm state of the Laodicean Church points to ideal conditions after this fashion.*

And the leaven, after many centuries of deteriorating work, *will be brought into the advanced stages of its action and do its MOST damaging work within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church near the end of the dispensation.*

The working of this leaven will be so complete that the question is asked in Luke 18:8, “...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?”

The response to the question, designated by the wording in the Greek text, is *NEGATIVE*. The Son of Man *will NOT* find “the faith” upon the earth when He returns. Rather, He will find conditions as depicted in Rev. 3:14ff.

“The faith” in Luke 18:8 *can ONLY* be synonymous with *faith* exhibited by Christians in passages such as I Tim. 6:12 and Jude 3.

This is the faith *connected with laying hold on eternal life [life for the age]* in I Timothy, the faith *in opposition to the great apostasy of the latter days* in Jude, the faith *destroyed by the working of the leaven within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church, producing the conditions described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”*

This is *the reason* Christendom exists as it is seen today.

The corruption brought about by the leaven, destroying “the faith,” has produced a condition in which Christ’s return is either *NOT taught at all* or it is invariably taught in such a way that things surrounding “the faith” *are NOT dealt with*.

(Christendom today, from a humanistic standpoint, can be seen in all types of stages, covering a wide panorama of differences.

For example, there are Churches which are either exclusively homosexual or churches openly accepting homosexuals into their fellowship, both seeing homosexuality as simply an alternate lifestyle [in line with the world’s view].

Then there are very liberal Churches which bear little resemblance to that which Scripture teaches; there are more orthodox-type Churches which are teaching correct Biblical doctrine in a number of areas; and there are Churches which pride themselves on their fundamentalism, etc.

But there is ONE thing which, with rare exception, ALL of them have in common, revealing their true identity — as being Laodicean, NOT Philadelphian. With rare exception, NONE of them either know anything about or will have anything to do with

the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom, the central message of Scripture which the leaven has been centering its attack upon for two millenniums.

In fact, many of the Churches which pride themselves on their fundamentalism, unlike many of the more liberal Churches which are out of the mainstream of things in this respect, *will often go out of their way to fight teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.*

And, because of the working of the leaven throughout two millenniums of time, *the preceding is perfectly understandable.*

The leaven knows NO boundaries within Christendom, ONLY ONE object:

Destroy ANY and ALL teaching pertaining to the Word of the Kingdom.

True fundamentalism in Christianity *would necessitate an adherence to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, which, of necessity, would have to CENTER around the Word of the Kingdom.*

This is the way *it WAS* in Ephesus [the first of the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3], *UNTIL they left their first love.* And this is the way *it MUST be* in any Church today which would look upon itself as *Philadelphian* rather than *Laodicean* — which would require an adherence to or a return to that taught and believed in Ephesus, *to true fundamentalism, BEFORE the Church left its first love.*

Between these two points, *there is NO middle ground. A person, or a complete Church, is EITHER for Christ OR against Christ* [Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23].

A Church *is EITHER Philadelphian* [centers its teaching around the Word of the Kingdom] *OR Laodicean* [centers its teaching around other than the Word of the Kingdom]. And the latter, *regardless of how fundamental they might appear to be, is STILL Laodicean, NOT Philadelphian.*)

The very reason for the existence of Christians upon the earth *is inseparably linked to the coming kingdom.*

Christians are the ones destined to occupy the throne with Christ; *and THIS is the heart of that which has come under attack through the working of the leaven.*

Every Christian is in line to *inherit the rights of the first-born, the rights of primogeniture; and THESE rights, in their ENTIRETY, have to do with POSITIONS in the coming kingdom.*

EVERYTHING moves toward that day when Christ will take the kingdom; and this appears to be something viewed in a somewhat similar respect by BOTH the world around us and by the worldly-minded Laodicean Christians.

("The world" though really doesn't possess a spiritual capacity to understand the things surrounding that day when Christ takes the kingdom. All that "the world" can know is *fact* concerning the matter, *i.e.*, that Christ one day will take the kingdom.

The worldly-minded Laodicean Christians, on the other hand, possess a capacity for spiritual truth. But the things surrounding that day when Christ takes the kingdom *are of little to no interest to them.* They usually know little more [often no more] about the matter than "the world" itself.

They, as the world, are often quite content with the status quo.

There though is a segment of the Laodicean Church of today that places an emphasis upon Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom [the more fundamental branch]. BUT, teaching that ALL Christians will form Christ's bride, His co-heirs, and occupy positions with Him in the kingdom, with the judgment seat seen only as a rewarding platform, they end up teaching a form of the doctrine of Balaam, as taught in the Church in Pergamos; and, consequently, they find themselves like the Church in Sardis, having a name that they LIVE, though they, in reality, are DEAD.)

2) Goal and Conclusion of the Matter in Prophecy

When the birth of the nation of Israel occurred in Egypt, followed by this nation being removed from Egypt, there was a *PURPOSE, a GOAL, behind that which had occurred.*

Israel, as *God's firstborn son*, was to be removed from one land, placed in another, and realize the rights of primogeniture in that land.

Israel was to enter into the land of Canaan and rule over the Gentile nations of the earth. And *not ONLY* was Israel to rule after this fashion, *BUT* Israel was also to be “a kingdom of priests” through whom all the Gentile nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5, 6).

Israel being placed in this position would bring about the fulfillment of one part of Gen. 22:17 (*the earthly seed of Abraham* [*the sand which is upon the seashore*]) would “possess the gate of his enemies [rule over his enemies]”; and, through this means, Gen. 22:18 could be fulfilled insofar as the earthly aspect of the kingdom was concerned (“And in thy seed shall all the nations [all the Gentiles] of the earth be blessed”).

(For the earthly aspect of the kingdom to be brought into full fruition though, the entirety of Gen. 22:17, 18 would have to be brought to pass. The heavenly aspect of the kingdom would have to be brought into existence as well.

The seed of Abraham would have to possess the gate of the enemy *in BOTH heavenly and earthly realms*.

The removal of Satan and his angels from the heavenly realm of the kingdom in the middle of the Tribulation and their being bound and cast into an abyss at the end of the Tribulation, an abyss which is sealed for 1,000 years, *ANTICIPATES this at a yet future time* [Rev. 12:7; 20:1-3].

And the establishment of the kingdom *in an overall respect DEMANDS this*, for Scripture clearly reveals that *BOTH the earthly seed of Abraham [Israel] and the heavenly seed of Abraham [the Church] will reign with Christ in the kingdom at this time — one UPON earth, the other IN the heavens.*)

When God called the Church into existence, as when He called Israel into existence, *there was a PURPOSE/a GOAL* be-

hind His calling; and the thought of “eternal redemption,” which too often is erroneously made the key issue, DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN to deal with the matter.

Christians have been called into existence (they have become possessors of eternal life) in order to realize an inheritance “reserved in heaven,” associated with a “salvation” to be revealed (I Peter 1:3-11).

Christians have been called into existence to be removed from one land, be placed in another, and realize the rights of primogeniture in that land.

Christians are to inhabit a heavenly land and occupy the throne as co-regents with Christ when He rules the nations with a rod of iron.

And Christians, comprising “the Church of the firstborn [a called out group of firstborn sons]” — as Israel fulfilling the rights of primogeniture on earth — are to exercise a priestly function in this rule. Christians are NOT ONLY to be “kings” BUT they are to also be “priests” in that day (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 5:10; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6).

The nations are NOT ONLY to be ruled by Christians (from a heavenly sphere) BUT the nations are to receive spiritual blessings through the position which Christians will occupy as well (as Christians exercise the full rights of the firstborn).

And, as this rule progresses through Israel on earth (as a restored and believing Israel is placed at the head of the nations), spiritual blessings will flow out to the Gentile nations through Israel (as Israel exercises the full rights of the firstborn).

Christians being placed in this position in the heavens will effect the fulfillment of one part of Gen. 22:17 (the heavenly seed of Abraham [“the stars of the heaven”] will “possess the gate of his enemies [rule over his enemies]).

And Israel being placed in this position on earth will effect the fulfillment of the other part of Gen. 22:17 as well (the earthly seed of Abraham [“the sand which is upon the seashore”] will “possess the gate of his enemies”).

THEN, Gen. 22:18 will be fulfilled in relation to both heavenly and earthly aspects of the kingdom (“And in thy seed shall all the nations [Gentile nations] of the earth be blessed” [cf. Gal. 3:17, 18, 29]).

And this will bring a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees at the time of his call (Gen. 12:1-3), *long before either Israel or the Church was ever brought into existence.*

Genesis 22:17, 18 will, thus, find its proper fulfillment in the coming age when God’s firstborn sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]) occupy their proper places in relation to the earth as they exercise the rights of primogeniture.

ISRAEL will occupy the EARTHLY sphere of the kingdom in the capacity set forth in these verses.

The CHURCH will occupy the HEAVENLY sphere of the kingdom in the capacity set forth in these same verses.

And CHRIST will rule in BOTH spheres of the kingdom.

Christ will rule *from His Own throne in the heavenly Jerusalem*, with Christians occupying positions as co-heirs on the throne with Him (Rev. 3:21; cf. Rom. 8:14-21); and Christ will also rule *from David’s throne in the earthly Jerusalem*, in the midst of His people Israel (Luke 1:31-33).

And within this complete structure of the kingdom (heavenly and earthly spheres), *the seed of Abraham will “possess the gate” of the enemy, and the Gentile nations of the earth will “be blessed.”*

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament moved beyond the things surrounding the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt and advanced toward the land of Canaan. However, the actions of “many” brought displeasure to the Lord; and these individuals were overthrown in the wilderness, short of realizing the purpose for their deliverance from Egypt (I Cor. 10:1-5). They were overthrown *on the RIGHT side of the blood BUT on the WRONG side of the goal of their calling.*

Thus it is with Christians during the present dispensation. They have appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb and placed themselves in a position to move toward a heavenly land, wherein their calling will be realized.

But the actions of “many” will bring about the displeasure of the Lord, resulting in their overthrow, short of realizing the purpose for their deliverance from this world. Their overthrow will occur *on the RIGHT side of the blood BUT on the WRONG side of the goal of their calling.*

The Laodicean Church sets forth the far-reaching heights of failure on the part of the Church in this respect.

The Church in the latter days of the dispensation, saturated through and through with leaven, *will be filled with Christians having NO understanding or regard for the PURPOSE surrounding their salvation.*

And one day, appearing at the judgment seat in this condition, they will suffer the fate awaiting those in the Church in Laodicea who spurned the call to “repent.” *They will be REJECTED for POSITIONS with Christ in the kingdom, FAILING to realize the very PURPOSE for their salvation.*

The Overcomer's Promise

The promise that the overcomer will one day be allowed to sit with Christ on His throne comprises the pinnacle toward which all of the overcomer's promises move.

ALL of the promises are *MILLENNIAL* in their scope of fulfillment, and *ALL* have to do with Christians occupying future positions as co-heirs with Christ. *ALL* point to and find their fulfillment in Christians exalted, with Christ, to the place for which they were called into existence.

Overcoming Christians occupying the throne with Christ *MUST* be properly equipped to fulfill all the functions of the office which they are to hold. Merely being seated on the throne in fulfillment of the seventh and last of the overcomer's promises will be insufficient in and of itself.

All the things contained in the first six overcomer's promises MUST also be realized in the lives of Christians as they occupy positions on the throne, for ONLY in this manner will Christians come into possession of all which God requires for those ruling as co-heirs with His Son.

1) *Overcoming or Being Overcome*

The analogy given in Rev. 3:21 has to do with Christians patterning their lives after Christ's life, *with overcoming and the throne in view.*

Christ overcame and is presently occupying a position with the Father on His throne, and Christians are to overcome and one day occupy a position with the Son on His throne. The exact wording of the text is, "...to him that overcometh...even as I also overcame..."

A CONFLICT, ending in victory, is in view FIRST; and THEN the THRONE comes into view. The latter is NOT attained without the former.

Christ's overcoming is associated with His *sufferings* during the time of His shame, reproach, and rejection; and Scripture makes the matter very clear that overcoming for Christians *is to be NO different.*

Christ has "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"; *and overcoming Christians MUST*

enter into these sufferings.

Regarding this matter, Christians are told:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are *partakers of Christ’s sufferings*; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (I Peter 4:12, 13; *cf.* I Peter 2:21-23).

The thought is very simple:

Christians are to follow the example which Christ has left, knowing, as He knew, that connected with the SUFFERINGS is the shame, reproach, and rejection; BUT, beyond all of this lies the GLORY (Heb. 12:1, 2).

In Revelation chapters two and three, *overcoming is with a view to the THRONE*; and in portions of Scripture such as the Book of I Peter, *suffering is with a view to GLORY*. *Overcoming is inseparably connected with SUFFERING, as is the throne with GLORY.*

The sufferings of Christ find their beginning in the fact that He “came unto his own [‘own things’], and his own [‘own people’] received him not” (John 1:11).

(There is a distinction in the Greek text between two words in this verse which is not brought out in the English text at all.

The gender of the first word translated “own” is neuter [pl.], indicating “things”; but the gender of the second is masculine [pl.], indicating “people.”)

The “things” to which Christ came refer to those things which were rightfully His: the Davidic throne, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.

And the “people” to whom He came refer to His brethren after the flesh, the nation of Israel.

Christ suffered at the hands of His Own people, among others, because of things which were rightfully His, to which He came.

ALL the sufferings of Christ, after some fashion, were associated with His "own things"; and coming into possession of His "own things" is something which MUST NOT ONLY follow His sufferings BUT is something which CAN ONLY be millennial in its scope of fulfillment.

His "own things" are intimately linked *with His coming rule over the earth*. He was born "King of the Jews," He presented Himself to Israel as the nation's "King," He was crucified "King of the Jews," and when He returns it will be as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27:37; Rev. 19:16).

Christ at THAT time, NOT before, will come into the realization of His Kingship and come into possession of His Own things.

While here on earth the first time, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Christ met the incumbent ruler (Satan) face to face in order to reveal that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam had forfeited in the fall.

This included *NOT ONLY* fallen man ultimately being placed back in the position for which he was originally created *BUT also* the restoration of the ruined creation itself (the forfeited domain, which was rightfully His).

Following this, Christ suffered rejection time and again by the Jewish people; and the entire matter was climaxed by His being arrayed as a mock King by those to whom the Jewish religious leaders had delivered Him — the Gentile power of that day, the Romans.

Arraying Christ as a mock king, they placed a robe on Him, a crown of thorns on His head, and a reed for a scepter in His right hand.

Then they bowed the knee to Him in a mocking fashion, ridiculing His true position as King, spitting upon Him, and taking the reed and striking Him on the head.

And crucifixion then followed (Matt. 27:27ff).

During all of this, His "own things" were held in abeyance.

There was NO attempt on Christ's part to interfere with the incumbent powers and authorities, WHETHER of Satan and his angels holding the sceptre in the heavens OR of the Gentile nations holding the sceptre here on earth, ruling under the heavenly powers.

It was NOT time for Him to take the sceptre. He suffered through all of this, climaxed by Calvary itself.

He has overcome, and the call has gone forth for Christians to overcome as *He overcame*.

And overcoming, as He overcame, looks ahead to that future day when Christ will come into possession of His "own things," with overcoming Christians ascending the throne as co-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:15-19).

The things of that day though are *future* in their entirety and have *NOTHING* to do with man during the present day and time.

Man during the present day and time is still living during the day of Christ's shame, reproach, and rejection; and the attitude which Christians are to exhibit toward the "things" to which Christ came *MUST* parallel the attitude which Christ took toward these things when He was upon earth the first time.

Involvement in the affairs of the present world system does *NOT* become Christians at all.

Such involvement would result in their being overcome by the world rather than their overcoming the world.

Such involvement would be occupying an opposite position to that which Christ occupied relative to a world controlled by Satan and his angels through the Gentile nations.

The words, "as I also overcame," and the words, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps," *MUST* be pondered and heeded by any Christian aspiring to be an overcomer.

When Christ returns to earth the second time, He will once again come *to His Own things and to His Own people; BUT, this time He will come into possession of His Own things, and His Own people will receive Him.*

Many of the things to which Christ came in the past and will come in the future, given to Him by the Father, are presently being extended to Christians.

Overcoming Christians are to inherit with Christ; and, insofar as the heavenly aspect of the kingdom is concerned, these Christians are to participate with Christ in the things to which He came almost two millenniums ago.

Christians occupying their proper place in Christ's rejection, shame, and reproach today will result in these same Christians occupying their proper place in Christ's acceptance, glory, and exaltation yet future.

2) *My Throne, My Father's Throne*

The Son is *presently* seated with His Father on His Father's throne (Ps. 110:1). *BUT*, at the end of Man's Day — for the duration of the Millennium, when the Lord's Day will exist on earth — Christ will sit *on His Own throne*; and it will be during this time that the overcomer's promise in Rev. 3:21 will be fulfilled.

Following the Millennium, after all things have been brought under subjection to Christ, *the kingdom will be delivered up* "to God, even the Father." At that time the Son will also Himself "be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all [*lit.*, '...that God may be all things in all of these things']" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

The Son's throne will then cease to exist as a separate throne, *and there will be ONE throne* — "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1, 3).

The Father's throne is the point from which God presently administers His rule throughout the entire universe.

Messianic angels — Satan among them, though as a rebel ruler — presently rule under God throughout God's creation (Job 1:6; 2:1; Ezek. 28:14). And the earth, in this respect, is one of numerous provinces in God's kingdom which are ruled by messianic angels.

Scripture clearly infers that numerous provinces (worlds) exist throughout the universe, over which messianic angels rule.

The scene presented in Job chapters one and two is that of Satan appearing in the midst of certain other angels who can only be his equals (*i.e.*, other messianic angels who rule under God over other provinces, as Satan rules this one province, the earth, under God). And it appears that within the sphere of God's government of the universe these messianic angels are summoned into His presence at scheduled times in what could be called *congresses of the sons of God*.

(Man, during the past few years, has, for the first time, been able to look through his powerful telescopes and see many of the other solar systems in his own galaxy [similar to the one in which he lives].

Man now knows, through his own scientific achievements and discoveries, that other solar systems exist in the universe. And the more man views the heavens with his increasingly powerful telescopes, the more he realizes that these other solar systems are far more numerous than he at first thought.

But this is as far as man can go with the matter within his science.

Scripture though *begins beyond the point* where man presently finds himself. Scripture begins at the point of revealing that messianic angels rule over provinces in the universe, simply inferring that other provinces exist [provinces other than the earth, provinces which man is presently discovering]. And these can only be other provinces in other solar systems [*i.e.*, planets revolving around other stars (the earth's sun is

a medium-size star)], not only in our galaxy but evidently in all the estimated billions of galaxies scattered throughout the universe.

Scripture no more attempts to prove the existence of these other provinces than it does the existence of God Himself. As with the existence of God, Scripture simply deals with these other provinces from the standpoint that they exist, providing revelation beginning at this point.

It is left to finite man to believe that he has wrought some great astronomical achievement through recent findings, made possible by his use of more powerful, orbiting telescopes.

Man though, in his scientific achievements in this realm, *has NOT even arrived at the point where Scripture, dealing with these things, begins; NOR can man ever arrive at this point through his science.*

Actually, man, in his quest for knowledge pertaining to all which exists in the universe, has yet to arrive at and believe or understand the simplicity of the very opening words of Scripture — “In the beginning God created the heaven [‘heavens’] and the earth” [Gen. 1:1].

Had man simply turned to and believed the Scriptures in the beginning, rather than seeking answers through science, he could have learned, millenniums ago, things concerning *HOW* the universe was brought into existence [something which *he can NEVER discover* within his science] *or HOW* the universe is structured [something which *he can ONLY begin to discover* within his finite, scientific ability].

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *The Most High Ruleth.*)

Christ is presently seated with His Father upon a throne from which the government of the universe is administered.

The future government which Christ will administer from His Own throne though *will be limited to the earth over which Satan presently rules, for He is to REPLACE Satan and rule over the SAME domain.*

The other messianic angels are not in view at all in this sphere of activity. They administer affairs over provinces unrelated to Satan's domain and unrelated to the reason for the appearances of the first man, the first Adam, and the second Man, the last Adam.

The creation of man, in keeping with the entire matter, *is peculiar to the earth. Man's creation is directly related to the governmental administration of THIS earth; and once man finds himself in the position which he was created to occupy (when he finds himself seated on the throne with the second Man, the last Adam, ruling over the earth), his rule will have to do with THIS earth ALONE, during its last 1,000 years, prior to the destruction of the present heavens and earth.*

Angelic rule over the earth will, at THAT time, end, for man will replace angels (Heb. 2:5).

BUT, angelic rule elsewhere in the universe will remain completely unaffected. Angelic rulers elsewhere in the universe had NO involvement with Satan's fall and man's subsequent creation.

Satan and his angels are the ones who rebelled, resulting in their disqualification to rule, necessitating their ultimate removal. Satan sought a regal position above that in which God had placed him; he sought a regal position above the other messianic angels; he sought to occupy a position in which he would be like God Himself, from which he could administer power and authority throughout the universe.

He led a great host of the angels ruling under him in this attempt, and his failure to succeed brought about a wrecked kingdom and the pronouncement of judgment (Gen. 1:1, 2a; Isa. 14:13-17).

The creation was later restored, and man was brought into existence *for the express PURPOSE of taking the sceptre which Satan had forfeited.*

However, man's fall resulted *in both a ruined creature and a ruined creation*, necessitating the appearance at a later date of the second Man, the last Adam, with a view to the subsequent "restitution of all things" (Gen. 1:2b-28; 3:6, 7, 17, 18; Acts 3:21).

ONLY after all things have been restored will man realize his calling — *holding the sceptre while seated on the throne with Christ*.

ALL things relating to man — his creation, fall, redemption, and coming rule — are peculiarly related to the earth.

Thus, during the coming age, the only change in governmental affairs throughout God's universe will be in the sphere of Satan's present governmental administration — *his rule over the earth upon which man resides*.

On this province, man, realizing his high calling, will come into the position previously occupied by angels; but elsewhere in the universe, angelic rule over other provinces in the kingdom of God can only continue unchanged.

Concluding Thoughts:

Christendom, near the conclusion of this dispensation, *will be marked by ONE main feature, foretold almost two millenniums in advance: APOSTASY*. This is the situation revealed by the sequential arrangement of the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, the books of II Peter and Jude, and by portions of Scripture such as I Tim. 4:1ff and Luke 18:8.

The working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 *CANNOT be checked or stopped within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church of today*.

Deterioration can ONLY continue UNTIL the whole has been leavened.

The people of God though *have NOT been left alone and helpless* against the deteriorating process of the leaven. God has promised that He will *NEVER leave NOR forsake* His people (Deut. 31:6; Heb. 13:5).

Christians are in possession of *God's Word* and the *in-dwelling Holy Spirit*; and a knowledge of this Word, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, *is the ONE great protection, the ONLY protection, which Christians possess against the false doctrine produced by the working of the leaven* (cf. Isa. 8:20; John 16:13-15; 17:14; II Cor. 4:16; Phil. 1:6; Col. 3:10).

Then, as depicted in the message to the Church in Laodicea, Christ stands and knocks at the door of the lukewarm Church during the final eroding stages of the working of the leaven, extending an invitation *to ANY Christian who will heed His voice*.

This invitation, contextually, is with a view to overcoming; and overcoming is, in turn, with a view to ultimately occupying a POSITION as CO-HEIR with Christ on His throne.

15

Crowns Cast Before God's Throne

By Whom, When, Reason

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold...

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne... (Rev. 4:1-4, 10).

(Properly understanding certain things in Rev. 4, 5, *within context* [following that seen in chs. 1-3 but preceding that dealt with in chs. 6ff], *is crucial* to a proper understanding of the Book of Revelation as a whole.

Revelation 4 will be dealt with in this present chapter. And Rev. 5 will be dealt with in the opening three chapters of Vol. II of this book.

The importance of properly understanding that dealt with in Rev. 4, 5 CANNOT be overemphasized.)

Immediately following events seen in chapters two and three, attention is again called to that previously seen in chapter one — John being removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day (*cf.* 1:10; 4:1, 2a).

Scripture, in its structure, has a way of repeating things at times *in order to provide a base for supplying additional information or details on a subject.* And repeating that seen in chapter one at this later time in the book, in chapter four (following events seen in chs. 1b-3), *would have to do with Scripture providing additional information relating to the Church following events surrounding the judgment seat.*

In chapter one — immediately after John had been removed from Man's Day, moved forward in time, and placed in the Lord's Day — he was shown *the complete Church in Christ's presence, with Christ presented in His future JUDICIAL role, NOT in His present HIGH PRIESTLY role (ref. Chs. IV, V in this first volume of the book).*

And, since this is clearly *a JUDICIAL scene following the rapture*, that which is dealt with in these verses *can ONLY refer to ONE thing.*

These verses in chapter one *can ONLY refer to:*

1) *The complete Church, ALL Christians throughout the dispensation (shown by the number of the Churches [seven, showing the completeness of that which is in view]), being removed from the earth at the end of the dispensation (shown by John's removal).*

2) *The complete Church appearing in Christ's presence to be judged (shown by Christ appearing as Judge, with the seven candlesticks [the seven Churches] appearing in His presence).*

THEN, with the central subject established in chapter one, chapters two and three simply continue with an expansion of this subject.

THIS central subject, established in chapter one, continuing into chapters two and three, clearly has to do with Christians before the judgment seat. But the manner in which the Churches are set forth in these two chapters — beginning with Ephesus which had left its “first love” (2:4) and ending with Laodicea which is described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (3:17) — it is also evident that a history of the Church throughout the dispensation is shown in these chapters as well.

And, with these things in mind, the Spirit of God leading John to begin chapter four at the same point as seen in chapter one would *NOT ONLY* provide a means for setting forth the same thing clearly taught a number of other places in Scripture — *the removal of the complete Church at the end of the dispensation — BUT it would also provide a base for additional revelation surrounding Christians following the judgment seat.*

That is, viewing chapters two and three from a *historical perspective* (depicting a history of the Church throughout the dispensation), chapter four, beginning at the same point as seen in chapter one, *shows the removal of the complete Church at the end of the dispensation.*

Chapter one (vv. 10ff) deals with the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation *in relation to the judgment seat*; and chapter four (vv. 1, 2ff) deals with the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation *in relation to the history of the Church throughout the 2,000-year dispensation (FROM Ephesus, the beginning state, which left its “first love,” TO Laodicea, the ending state, seen as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”).*

THEN, along with showing the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation in a historical respect, something FAR MORE in keeping with the central subject of the Christian section of the book can be shown by again beginning at the same point as seen back in Rev. 1:10.

The Heavenly Scene

Immediately after attention has been called to the same event seen in Rev. 1:10 (in Rev. 4:1, 2a), John, rather than seeing a judicial scene (as in ch. 1), now sees a rainbow encircled throne, with God seated on the throne (vv. 2b, 3).

And surrounding this throne, John sees twenty-four other thrones and twenty-four crowned “elders” seated on these thrones (v. 4).

(The significance of attention called to a rainbow encircling God’s throne at this point in the book can be seen in the first mention of a rainbow in Scripture [Gen. 9:13-17].

The rainbow appeared in Genesis following the completion of God’s judgment [the Flood], and the same thing is seen in Rev. 4:3 *relative to the COMPLETION of the JUDGMENT at hand, the judgment of Christians in chs. 1b-3.*)

At this point in the book, events pertaining to the dispensation in which the Spirit spent 2,000 years searching for a bride for God’s Son *are COMPLETE (chs. 2, 3, viewed from a historical perspective).*

As well, events surrounding the judgment seat *are ALSO COMPLETE (chs. 1b-3, viewed from the manner in which chs. 2, 3 are introduced in ch. 1b).*

And, because of the reason for the dispensation and the judgment seat, and because of the point toward which ALL Scripture moves, the logical place where one would expect activity to now be centered at this point in the book would be concerning bringing about the realization of that stated in Heb. 2:5:

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.”

And Heb. 2:5 would be brought to pass through Christ “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10), resulting from decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat.

And events having to do with bringing that stated in Heb. 2:5, 10 to pass (cf. Rom. 8:17-19) is EXACTLY what can be found in Revelation chapters four and five.

In the latter part of Rev. 4:2, immediately following the repetition from chapter one concerning the removal of the Church (vv. 1, 2a), John begins to describe various things about God's throne, which he both sees and hears — "lightnings," "thunderings," and "voices" coming out of the throne, and "lamps of fire burning before the throne" (v. 5).

And "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne" John sees four living creatures who "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"; and these living creatures "give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever" (vv. 6-9).

THEN, the scene returns to the twenty-four elders, who arise from their thrones, fall down before God, worship Him, relinquish their crowns to the One Who originally placed them in regal positions, and express adoration to the One worthy "to receive glory and honor and power" (vv. 4, 10, 11).

If an apex is to be found in the Book of Revelation, aside from the actions of the mighty angel in chapter ten (based on previous events dealt with in ch. 5) and events surrounding Christ's return in chapter nineteen (*ref.* Volumes II, III in this book), *the action of these twenty-four elders would have to be considered.*

The action of these elders in Revelation chapter four is *significant beyond degree in relation to the central message of this book.*

Crowns, Regality, Government

"Crowns" have to do with *regality*, and the *government of the earth* is in view throughout the Book of Revelation.

At this point in the book, the judgment of Christians, *with a view to regality*, will have just occurred.

And, *with a view to this same regality*, Christ, following this, *is seen as the One about to redeem the forfeited inheritance* through taking the seven-sealed scroll from God's right hand and breaking the seals (chs. 5ff).

Angels have ruled over the earth since time immemorial — since that time when God established the government of the earth in the beginning.

And angels will STILL be exercising rulership over the earth at this point in the book, following the judgment of Christians.

And angels will continue ruling *UNTIL* Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) take the kingdom, following Christ's return to the earth.

Accordingly, *NEITHER Christ NOR Christians* will receive the crowns which they are to wear during the Messianic Era *UNTIL AFTER Christ returns to the earth following the Tribulation*.

The crown *which Christ will wear during the Messianic Era is presently being worn by Satan*, as he continues to exercise power over the earth. And the crowns *which Christians will wear* in that day are presently being worn by two segments of angels — *the angels presently ruling with Satan, and the angels who refused to follow Satan when he sought to elevate his throne above the power which God had delegated to him*.

When Satan sought to elevate his throne — following his being placed over the earth, with a large contingent of angels ruling the earth with him — only one-third of these ruling angels followed Satan and fell with him, with the other two-thirds refusing to follow him (*cf.* Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:3, 4).

Note the way Rev. 12:4a is worded in this respect:

“And his [the dragon's, Satan's] tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven [referring to angels (*cf.* Job. 38:7; Rev. 1:20)] and did cast them to the earth...”

(This "third part," after millenniums of time and separation [separation of one-third from the other two-thirds], *is still recognized at this future time as only part of a larger group, only part of all the angels ruling with Satan from the beginning* [Job 38:4-7].)

And though the angels not following Satan didn't continue ruling with him, they *could NOT* immediately relinquish their appointed positions. Rather, they *HAD to retain their positions for a time, remaining crowned.*

(A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler retain his crown *UNTIL* the one replacing him is *NOT ONLY* on the scene *BUT* ready to ascend the throne. *ONLY THEN can an incumbent ruler relinquish his crown.*

For example, note the account of Saul and David forming a type of Satan and Christ in I, II Samuel:

[Saul, though disqualified following his refusal to slay Amalek, retained his crown and continued to reign *UNTIL David was NOT ONLY present BUT ready to ascend the throne.*

Once David had acquired a contingent of faithful men to reign with him...

THEN, Saul's crown was taken, given to David; and David, along with these faithful men, ascended the throne and reigned in the stead of Saul and those who had ruled with him.]

And it will be *EXACTLY* the same in the antitype. Satan, though disqualified, will retain his crown and continue to reign *UNTIL Christ is NOT ONLY present BUT ready to ascend the throne.*

ONCE Christ has acquired a contingent of faithful men to reign with him [*ONCE* the present search of the spirit for the bride has been brought to pass (Gen. 24)]...

THEN, Satan's crown will be taken, given to Christ; and Christ, along with His faithful followers, will ascend the throne and reign in the stead of Satan and those who had ruled with him, both before and after his fall [Rev. 19:11-20:6].)

This same established principle *MUST* prevail relative to both the angels refusing to follow Satan in his attempt to elevate his throne and those who did follow him. This entire contingent of angels (both fallen and unfallen) *MUST* retain their crowns *UNTIL* those who are to replace them, those who are to wear these crowns, *are NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to ascend the throne.*

These relinquished crowns though will be worn ONLY AFTER Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, overthrows Satan and his angels, and forcibly takes their crowns.

ONLY THEN will Christ be in possession of *ALL the crowns* which He and His bride are destined to wear as they ascend the throne and rule the earth.

This entire scenario of events, as it pertains to the government of the earth, is introduced in Revelation chapter four. It is introduced immediately following events surrounding the judgment seat when, *for the FIRST time in the history of the earth, those who are to ascend the throne with God's Son will have been called out of the larger body of Christians and revealed.*

Those shown worthy to take the crowns worn by Satan and his angels up to this point in time will then be on the scene, ready to ascend the throne. *And for the FIRST time in the history of the earth, angels can relinquish their crowns.*

THIS is the FIRST order of activity seen in the Book of Revelation occurring immediately following issues and determinations dealt with at the judgment seat.

And so it should be, for, according to Rom. 8:19-23, the entire creation (as it pertains to the earth, both the material creation and redeemed man) presently groans and travails,

awaiting “the manifestation of the sons of God” (a new order of sons — *taken from among redeemed man, NOT from angels*).

Revelation chapter four is the point in the book where this manifestation of a new order of sons has its beginning.

It begins here by the relinquishment of crowns (for those comprising this new order of sons will have been revealed), making possible a later full manifestation of regal activity by man at the time of Christ's return.

Thus, with the introduction of crowns cast before God's throne in Rev. 4:10, 11, *ONLY one group of individuals could possibly be in view* (if one remains within context and keeps in mind the earth's government in both history and prophecy).

These twenty-four elders *can ONLY represent angelic rulers* (cf. Heb. 2:5). *Angels ALONE will possess crowns in relation to the government of the earth at this time* (as they do during the present time).

(Some Bible students, on the basis of the pronouns used in Rev. 5:9, 10 — “us” and “we” [KJV] — have understood the twenty-four elders *to represent redeemed men, not angels*.)

However, the majority of the better Greek manuscripts render the pronouns in v. 10 as “them” and “they” [ref. ASV, NASB, NIV, Wuest, Weymouth], giving rise to the thought that the pronoun “us” in v. 9 is probably a scribal insertion, being spurious [ref. Alford, Lenski].

But the matter is really not left to manuscript evidence alone. That the pronouns “them” and “they” are correct is evident from the context.

Note that the song in vv. 9, 10 is apparently sung *NOT ONLY* by the “twenty-four elders” *BUT* also by the “four beasts [‘living creatures’]” as well. Then, *other angels* join them in vv. 11ff, with *ALL of the angels together* voicing additional, related statements.

Aside from the preceding, *it would make absolutely NO sense whatsoever* to understand these twenty-four elders as referring to a segment of redeemed mankind. Man couldn't possibly be crowned at the time of events in Rev. 4, 5, else he would be crowned before Christ is crowned [note that Christ is to wear the crown which Satan presently wears, which Satan will still be wearing at this time].

As well, *man is to wear the crown he receives, NOT relinquish it before God's throne, as seen being done by the twenty-four elders.*

Also, the Greek word translated "elders" in Revelation chapter four is *presbuteroi*, the same word used for "elders" in the Church in the New Testament epistles. The word refers to *older ones* [relative to that being dealt with].

In the Church, the reference is to *older ones in the faith.*

In Revelation chapter four, the reference is to *older ones in the governmental structure of the earth* [evident since they are crowned, seated on thrones, with the government of the earth being the *ONLY* government which could possibly be in view].

The preceding *ALONE* would prevent *ANY thought of the twenty-four elders being viewed as men.*

Rather, contextually, *they could ONLY be viewed ONE way. They could ONLY be viewed as ANGELS associated with the GOVERNMENT of the EARTH*

Man, at this point in the book, has yet to even come into such a position; angels, on the other hand, have held positions of this nature since time immemorial.)

At this point in the book, as previously seen, *CROWNS can be worn by angels ALONE.* And, as also previously seen, *angelic regality of this nature can ONLY have to do with ONE thing. It can ONLY have to do with the government of the earth.*

Thus, through the action of these twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne, *for the FIRST time in man's 6,000-year history, the transfer of the sceptre from the hands of angels into the hands of man can be said to have BEGUN.*

The Father is about to take the sceptre from Satan's hand and place it in His Son's hand (*cf.* Dan. 7:13, 14; Luke 19:12, 15; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff).

And these crowns are relinquished to God (cast before God's throne) — with a view to man ruling in the kingdom — so that God can appoint those who had previously been shown qualified through decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3) to positions of power and authority with His Son; and those whom the Father appoints will wear these crowns in His Son's kingdom.

These crowns are cast before God's throne (*cf.* 4:1-4; 5:1-7) *because the Father ALONE is the One Who places and/or removes rulers in His kingdom* (Dan. 4:17-37; 5:18-21; Matt. 20:20-23).

He ALONE is the One Who placed those represented by the twenty-four elders in the positions which they occupied; and He ALONE is the One Who will remove those represented by these elders from the positions in which He originally placed them and assign other individuals to positions in the kingdom, in their stead.

The transfer of the government of the earth, from the hands of angels into the hands of man, in reality, is what the first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation are about. And, as well, this is what the whole of Scripture preceding these nineteen chapters is also about as well.

In this respect, these twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne forms a KEY event which one MUST grasp IF he would properly understand the Book of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

Christ and His wife, in that coming day, will rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. And, in the process of ruling in this manner, they will wear ALL the crowns worn by Satan and his angels prior to his fall — both angels who did not follow Satan and those who did follow him.

Action of the Elders

Thus, that which is depicted through the action of the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:10, 11 is, contextually, self-explanatory.

This has to do with *the government of the earth*, it occurs at a time following events surrounding the judgment seat but preceding Christ breaking the seals of the seven-sealed scroll, and it occurs at a time when Satan's reign is about to be brought to a close.

After events in Revelation chapters one through three have come to pass, for the *FIRST* time in man's history, the person (the bride) who is to rule with the One to replace Satan (Christ) will have been made known and shown forth.

And events in the fourth chapter reflect that fact.

ONLY one thing could possibly be in view at this point in the book, for the bride will *NOT ONLY* have been made known *BUT* will be in a position for events surrounding the transfer of power to begin.

The twenty-four elders, angels not following Satan in his rebellion against God's supreme power and authority, *relinquish their crowns with a view to those comprising the bride wearing these crowns during the Messianic Era.*

But the crowns worn by Satan and those angels presently ruling with him are another matter.

These crowns will have to be taken from Satan and his angels *by force* when Christ returns to overthrow Gentile world power at the end of the Tribulation (a power exercised during Man's Day under Satan and his angels [Dan. 10:13-20]).

(The fact that angels represented by the twenty-four elders are *NOT* presently ruling with Satan can be shown *NOT ONLY* by their present position — in God's presence, in heaven — *BUT ALSO* by the Greek word which is used for the type crown which they are seen wearing.

There are two words in the Greek text for "crown" — *stephanos*, and *diadema*. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, with *regality* in view, one major distinction stands out concerning how these two words are used.

Diadema refers to the type crown worn by a monarch, *one presently exercising regal power*.

Stephanos, on the other hand, is used in an opposite sense. It is used *to show someone crowned but NOT presently exercising regal power*.

For example, the crown seen on Christ's head in Rev. 14:14, preceding His reign, is referred to by the word *stephanos* in the Greek text [also, the crown of thorns in Matt. 27:29].

A crown on Christ's head at any time prior to the end of Man's Day *could ONLY* anticipate His impending reign [a similar thought is set forth by the crown resting on Antichrist's head at the beginning of the Tribulation in Rev. 6:2, referred to through the use of the word *stephanos* [ref. Chapter VII in Volume II of this book].

Then, when Christ returns to the earth to take the kingdom, He will have many crowns upon His head; and the Greek text uses *diadema* rather than *stephanos* to refer to these crowns, for Christ will be returning as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" [Rev. 19:12, 16].

The twenty-four elders in chapter four cast crowns *referred to as stephanos* before the throne, indicating that, though crowned, these elders *were NOT* exercising regal power at this time [though the fact that they were seated on thrones and crowned portends *regal power* at some point in time (*in past time, as shown by their present positions and subsequent actions*)].

And the many crowns which Christ will have on His head at the time of His return are undoubtedly these same crowns [Rev. 19:12].

But, anticipating that day when Christ reigns, the Book of Revelation uses *the word diadema* to refer to these crowns, *for Christ will be exercising regal power at this time, with Satan about to be overthrown*.

The crowns [diadems] on Christ's head in Rev. 19:12 though *will NOT* be worn by Christ when He rules the earth, for He is to wear the crown presently worn by Satan [the incumbent ruler] in that day.

Rather, these crowns are undoubtedly reserved for those forming the bride [whom the Father will have previously appointed to various positions of power and authority with His Son]; and the Son will give these crowns to His co-heirs following that time when the remainder of the crowns having to do with the earth's government are forcibly taken from Satan and his angels.)

Twenty-Four, Thirty-Six

The identity of *the twenty-four elders* is shown *NOT ONLY* by *their actions* and *the place* in which this occurs in the book *BUT ALSO* by *their number*.

Comparing Revelation chapters four and twelve (4:4, 10, 11; 12:3, 4), it appears evident that the original government of the earth — originally established by God prior to Satan's fall — was representatively shown by *three sets of twelve, thirty-six crowned rulers*.

“Three” is the number of *Divine perfection*, and “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*.

Those angels *who did NOT* follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne would be represented by *the twenty-four elders* — *two sets of twelve, showing two-thirds of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan*.

And the angels who did go along with Satan, presently ruling with him, would be represented by *a third set of twelve, showing the other one-third of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan* (Rev. 12:3, 4).

In this respect, these three representative sets of twelve would show *Divine perfection in the earth's government*. And also in this respect, this same perfection in the structure of

the earth's government *has NOT existed since Satan's attempt to exalt his throne.*

BUT, THIS structured perfection WILL one day AGAIN exist in the earth's government.

When Christ and His wife ascend the throne, crowns worn by those represented by all three sets of twelve will be brought together again. *THEN, Divine perfection WILL once AGAIN exist in the government of the one province in God's universe where imperfection has existed for millenniums (cf. Col. 1:16-20).*

(Refer to Appendix IV, "Saul and David, Satan and Christ," in this volume of the book for additional information on material in this chapter.)

Appendix I

Actions Under Established Laws

God, Angels, Man

Throughout Scripture angels are seen as far more active in the Lord's affairs, as they pertain to man, than many realize. *Scripture often refers to the Lord acting in a particular realm, while also referring to angels acting in this same realm.*

In this respect, though angels are the executors, it is the Lord Who is looked upon in a foremost sense as bringing the matter to pass.

That is, the Lord assigns and empowers certain angels for particular tasks; and once these tasks are carried out, the matter is looked upon as being done by the Lord Himself.

Angelic Activity, the Lord's Activity

Two interrelated instances of the preceding can be seen in the destruction of the cities of the plain during the days of Abraham in Gen. 18, 19 and the removal of Nebuchadnezzar from his throne for seven years during the days of Daniel in Dan. 4:1ff.

Also, comparing these two instances provides an insight into heavenly angelic courts which God has established (apparently alluded to in Matt. 5:22 through a reference to corresponding earthly courts) and the power with which angels acting in these courts on His behalf have been vested.

And because of references to activity in these heavenly courts in Daniel, this passage will be dealt with first.

1) In Daniel 4:1ff

In the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, because of his ascribing to himself that which belonged to God alone (*cf.* 4:17, 30), was removed from the throne and driven into the field to eat grass as the oxen, remaining there for seven years.

The entire matter — judicial issues and determinations, the passing of the sentence, and the execution of the sentence — was carried out by angels, though “the most High” (God Himself) was specifically said to be the One Who brought the matter to pass.

Nebuchadnezzar had been delivered into the charge of angels called “watchers,” who had made certain decisions which resulted in a decree concerning him; and these decisions, resulting in the decree, were also ascribed to the “most High” (4:17, 24).

The “decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones” (v. 17) *can ONLY* point to angelic activity in heavenly courts concerning matters relating to individuals on earth.

It seems apparent that the angels in this passage possessed a specially imparted wisdom and knowledge, allowing them *to act within the scope of established laws to fulfill the perfect will of God concerning particular matters, apart from any immediate command from God. In so doing, the actions of these angels were looked upon as actions of the Lord Himself.*

(Undoubtedly the same thing is in view in Daniel chapter five where decisions were made and a decree was issued concerning Belshazzar. Note that Belshazzar was reminded of a time in Nebuchadnezzar’s life when similar action had to be taken for similar reasons [vv. 18-23].

The days of Belshazzar’s kingdom were at an end; he had been weighed in the balances and found wanting, and his kingdom, apparently within the scope of decisions and determinations made by angels in the heavenly courts, had been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians [vv. 24-31].)

2) In Genesis 18, 19

Understanding the working of these heavenly courts,

the same thing can evidently be seen in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

The Lord, accompanied by two angels, appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. The purpose of this visit concerned the impending destruction of the cities in the Jordan plain.

Comparing this section in Genesis with Daniel chapter four, it would appear clear that judicial decisions concerning these cities had already been made in the heavenly courts; and the “decree of the watchers” had already been rendered (cf. Gen. 18:17-22).

The Lord remained with Abraham, and the two angels accompanying the Lord went on down into the Jordan plain to carry out the previously rendered decree. *Everything relating to the destruction of these cities was apparently done by angels.*

In the light of Daniel chapter four, *it would appear clear that angels were the ones who had made the decisions and rendered the decree; and the Genesis account clearly shows that angels were the executors of the decree.*

However, *the same thing can be said of the Lord (cf. 18:20-33; 19:11-13, 16, 24, 29).*

It is the same as in Daniel chapter four. *Angelic activity in this realm — because of their ability to act within the scope of established laws, God’s perfect will — is looked upon as being done by the Lord Himself.*

Angelic activity in the heavenly courts, as it pertains to those upon the earth, will evidently be carried out in a climactic respect and on an intensified basis during the Tribulation.

Immediately preceding Christ’s return, during the Tribulation, *angels will be very instrumental in carrying out decrees through executing judgment upon the earth-dwellers; and their actions will be looked upon as those of the Lord Himself (Rev. 6:12-17; 8:1ff; 9:1ff; 11:18; 15:1; 16:1ff).*

3) *At Christ's Return*

Not only will this be the case, but angelic activity of the same nature will carry over into events surrounding Christ's presence upon earth following the Tribulation.

When Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, He will be accompanied by *an innumerable host of angels who will be instrumental in executing His will and purpose in matters which MUST be brought to pass preceding His reign.*

In Matt. 13:49, 50, angels are said to perform some of the same activity at the end of the age which Christ is said to perform in Matt. 25:32ff. Immediately preceding this, angels will have regathered Israel (Matt. 24:31); but elsewhere in Scripture it is the Lord Who regathers His people (Deut. 30:1-4; Isa. 11:10, 11; Jer. 23:7, 8).

Angels will apparently be *very active in ALL matters when Christ returns.* The Lord being accompanied by angels at the time of His return points simply to *continued angelic activity of a like nature to that which has occurred throughout the whole of Man's Day.*

Man's Activity, the Lord's Activity

The same principle seen in angelic activity, associating their actions with the Lord's actions, exists in connection with the proclaimed Word among God's people (Israel past and future, the Church present).

1) *Binding, Loosing*

This could perhaps best be seen in Christ's words to Peter in Matt. 16:19, repeated in another setting to all of the disciples later in Matt. 18:18:

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This statement to Peter in Matt. 16:19 (which grew out of his confession concerning Christ's true identity [v. 16]), along with the same statement to all the disciples at a later time, has not been understood at all by numerous Christians down through the years.

But there is really nothing difficult about that being taught, though a translation problem exists, and a corrected translation helps to understand Christ's statement in the light of angelic activity in heavenly courts, as previously discussed.

The translation problem involves the way in which the Greek verbs and participles in the verse ("bind" and "loose") are handled in the English text.

The binding and loosing here on earth are present aorist subjunctives, and the binding and loosing in the heavens are perfect passive participles (same in both Matt. 16:19 and 18:18; *cf.* John 20:23 [the present aorist and perfect passive are used here as well]).

To show this — the aorist subjunctive verbs and the perfect passive participles — the translation should read somewhat along these lines:

“...whatsoever you might bind on earth shall have already been bound in the heavens: and whatsoever you might loose on earth shall have already been loosed in the heavens.”

The subjunctive mood shows that which is probable, that expected, though it may not occur.

And the perfect tense shows that completed in past time, existing in a finished state during present time.

Those forming the Church (future at that time) are in view in Matt. 16:18; and either the Church (as in 16:18) or a Jewish assembly would be in view in Matt. 18:17. To properly understand the matter at hand, it would be immaterial which was in view.

(The word “Church” [Gk. *ekklesia*, meaning “called out,” referring to one group called out of another] was used of both Jews and Christians during the gospels and Acts, but Christians alone beyond Acts.)

When those in the Church today (or a past Jewish assembly) act *in COMPLETE accord* with that being dealt with in these verses, their actions — *EXACTLY* as the actions of angels acting under established laws in the heavenly courts — will be seen as having already been acted upon in the heavens.

In short, with the perfect tense being used in the manner in which it is used (a perfect passive), the actions of those in the Church (or a past Jewish assembly) on earth are seen *as having already been acted upon in the heavens before those on earth even act* (“bind” and “loose” are simply two words used to express these actions, both on earth and in the heavens).

2) *But, Exactly HOW...*

Now, what is this all about?

Can Christians in the Church (or a past Jewish assembly) just come to a conclusion on which they all agree and have that conclusion already be decided in the heavens?

That, of course, *is NOT the way matters exist, NO more so than angels in the heavenly courts can do the same and have their actions seen as the Lord’s actions.*

Angels in the heavenly courts, in order to have their actions seen as those of the Lord, *MUST act under established laws*; and Christians in the Church (or a past Jewish assembly), in order to have their actions seen as having already been performed in the heavens, *MUST do the same.*

Christians MUST act in complete accord with the revealed Word (EXACTLY as Peter acted in Matt. 16:16).

Remaining COMPLETELY within the scope of the proclaimed Word, that bound or loosed on earth will be seen as having ALREADY been bound or loosed in the heavens.

This CANNOT help but be the case, for God MUST remain COMPLETELY TRUE to His Word.

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6).

“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119:89).

“...thou hast magnified thy word above thy name [*lit.*, ‘...You have exalted Your Word and Your Name above all things’]” (Ps. 138:2b).

“To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God...

And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”

(John 1:1, 2, 14a).

It is THIS UNCHANGEABLE WORD ALONE (inseparably associated with the entire Godhead) which is to be proclaimed (II Tim. 4:2); and it is THIS UNCHANGEABLE WORD ALONE which Christians are to adhere to and follow in ALL matters.

And when this is done, that stated in Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23 CAN'T HELP BUT BE THE CASE in the actions of Christians here on earth (during present time) and in corresponding actions in the heavens (during ALL past, present, and future time).

3) Thus...

Thus, in the preceding respect, note the importance of two things:

1) KNOWING the Word (apart from which it CAN'T be PROCLAIMED, COMMUNICATED).

2) THEN, PROCLAIMING, COMMUNICATING the Word (NOT what you think, BUT WHAT the Word STATES).

Angels act under established laws; man acts under a set/established Word.

And ALL actions, whether of angels or of man, become THAT of the Lord WHEN these actions remain COMPLETELY within that which has been Divinely and unalterably set/established.

Appendix II

The Intractable Middle East Problem

A Solvable Problem, BUT ONLY ONE WAY!

“Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me...” (Ex. 4:22b, 23a).

(Almost all of the material in this part of the Appendix, save for comments on recent or current events in the world, can be found in material which the author has written at one time or another over the past forty years, scattered throughout the books which have been written during that time.

In this respect, the short version of the matter follows, with not that much explanation or that many references. The longer version of the matter, with explanations and references, can be found in the books.

This material was put together and sent out in the spring of 2007 because of a number of requests for comments brought about by the Middle East situation at that time. The material remains essentially unchanged from its original publication, *for that dealt with in the article will NOT change.*

It CANNOT change, for, aside from several comments on current events at the time that this material was written, the basis surrounding everything dealt with is the unchangeable Word.

And the preceding would pertain equally to the outbreak of violence throughout Israel beginning Oct. 7, 2023, then escalating throughout the Middle East and the world at large.

The existing Middle East problem is far from simple, though, from a Biblical standpoint, *NOT nearly as complex as one might be led to believe. FROM a Biblical standpoint, a person CAN understand the problem; APART FROM a Biblical standpoint, it is NOT possible to understand the problem.)*

“Israel,” surrounded by Moslem nations on three sides, with the Sea to the West, is, of course, *the KEY*.

And concerning problems existing between Israel and the nation’s Moslem neighbors in the Middle East (Arab, Iranian, *et al.*), during the spring of 1991, James Baker, Secretary of State under the first President Bush, stated that this is “the most intractable problem that there is.”

James Baker was also one of the two men (Lee Hamilton, the other) who co-chaired the Iraq Study Group in late 2006 — *The Baker-Hamilton Report* — turning out an assessment and recommendations on Iraq and the Middle East in general which referred to the situation as “grave and deteriorating,” warning of “dwindling chances to change course before crisis turns to chaos.”

And the somber faces and urgency in the voices of both James Baker and Lee Hamilton told the story apart from the report itself.

Was James Baker correct in his assessment of the situation in the Middle East in 1991?

Were James Baker, Lee Hamilton, and others ascribing to this 2006 assessment of the Middle East situation correct in their findings?

Both questions could *ONLY* be answered the same two-fold way:

1) From a Biblical standpoint, the situation is *FAR worse* than James Baker stated in 1991 or *The Baker-Hamilton Report* in 2006 indicated.

2) Also from a Biblical standpoint, the situation is *MUCH brighter* than James Baker stated in 1991 or *The Baker-Hamilton Report* in 2006 indicated.

And the preceding would require *explanation*, providing, at the same time, *information* to address the whole of the issue at hand.

So, let's look at it:

A Biblical Base

First, dealing particularly with the intractable problem in the Middle East, this *MUST* be done *from a Biblical base*. *There is NO other way*. Apart from a Biblical base, a person will *ONLY* find himself as mired down trying to deal with the problem as the problem itself has become.

A Biblical base is simple and easy to come by. However, *it would NOT be acceptable* to the secular world at all.

How could it be acceptable when most of those in the Middle East are Moslems, along with the fact that the Bible would not be acceptable as a base to work from by any nation attempting to solve the problem, whether the United States or elsewhere?

Even Israel would have major problems in this respect because of that which would have to be stated and dealt with.

And the preceding would be true even among many Christians in these nations.

Allow an example to illustrate the point, part of which bears directly on the Middle East situation. And, in order to understand the existing problem, *this would have to be dealt with first and foremost* anyway.

The One Nation with a God

In 1954, at the urging of President Eisenhower, the words "under God" were added to a line in the United States pledge of allegiance to the flag, making the pledge of allegiance read, "one nation under God" (the words, "under God" [or similar words] had been used in statements and documents by a number of preceding U.S. presidents, beginning with Washington, the first president).

BUT, is the United States really “one nation under God”? Is this true from a Biblical perspective? — *the ONLY place where one can possibly go to answer the question.*

Christians will fight the ACLU and others through whatever means deemed necessary over this issue. But does either side really know what Scripture has to say about the matter?

The Biblical base *for THIS and ALL the remainder of the Middle East problems can be found in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.*

One doesn't even have to go into the New Testament. Such would be of *LITTLE to NO value in the matter anyway, for there is NOTHING in the New that cannot be found in some form in the Old.*

The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that which had its beginning in the Old. So, for the most part, we'll simply stay with the Old since all of the information is there anyway.

1) “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem”

For “one nation under God” a person would begin with Genesis chapter nine and proceed from there. This chapter deals with Noah and his three sons following the Flood, and everyone in the human race today can trace their ancestry back to Noah through one of his three sons.

ONLY ONE of these three sons — Shem — is said to have a God (v. 26).

NEITHER Ham NOR Japheth had a God; and if either were to receive spiritual blessings, which could come ONLY from and through the one true God, he HAD to go to the one son with a God.

As stated in the text, Ham and/or Japheth *HAD to “dwell in the tents of Shem” (v. 27).*

That is to say, in order to receive spiritual blessings, Ham

and/or Japheth HAD to go to and partake of that which God HAD bequeathed to Shem.

Or, in the words of the explanatory statement by H. C. Leupold in his word studies in the Hebrew text of Genesis, the expression “implies friendly sharing of his hospitality and so of his blessings.”

This is the manner in which God has *established* the matter in Genesis, and *it can NEVER change.*

2) *Israel, the Nations*

The lineage from Shem, in the respect seen in Gen. 9:26, goes through *Abraham* nine generations later and then through *Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons*. And from Jacob’s twelve sons sprang the twelve tribes of Israel, forming the nation of Israel.

In short, *the descendants of Shem through this lineage ALONE have a God.* The whole of this matter is something clearly revealed and seen in Scripture.

Other descendants of Shem, those outside the lineage leading to Abraham, the Arab nations (from Abraham through Ishmael, or through one of the sons of Keturah, or through Isaac’s son, Esau), are as the descendants of Ham and Japheth in this respect. They are to be “reckoned among the nations [Gentile nations].”

Israel, on the other hand, is *NOT* to be “reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9).

With that as a base to work from, one can then understand verses such as Ps. 72:18 and Ps. 96:5.

The first verse refers to:

“...the Lord God, the God of Israel...”

And the second verse states:

“For all the gods of the nations are idols [*lit.*, ‘nothing’]...”

That is to say, the gods of all the nations (whether they be idols, demons, or anything else) are “nothing” compared to the God of Israel, the one true and living God.

Then note the first part of Ps. 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,” often misunderstood, believing that the reference can be to a Gentile nation.

But note the complete verse, set within context:

“The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen [Heb. *goyim*, ‘nations,’ plural] to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Blessed is the nation [Heb. *goy*, ‘nation,’ singular and articular] whose God is the LORD; *and* the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (vv. 10-12).

Gentile nations (*goyim*) are referenced in verse ten. Then the singular and articular use of *goyim* (*goy*) is seen in verse twelve.

The contextual use of the word *goy* in both verses ten and twelve, *ALONE*, relates what nations are in view.

In verse ten, God brings the counsel of the nations to naught and makes their plans of no effect (reminiscent of that which God states about the nations in Ps. 2).

Then in verse twelve, contrasted with verse ten, God blesses the nation, then further identifies this nation as “the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Note that the word “and” connecting the two parts of this verse is in italics, indicating that it is not in the Hebrew text; the latter part of the verse simply further identifies the nation in the first part of the verse).

“Nation” in verse twelve *could ONLY refer to ISRAEL three different ways — textually, contextually, and the place which Israel occupies in God’s economy.*

Israel is simply the ONLY nation with a God, and the ONLY way any Gentile nation can have a God is to go to the nation with a God, go to Israel.

God made that *quite clear* at the outset of His word, in Genesis chapter nine. And today, with Israel in her current state of unbelief, for the most part scattered among the nations, *it is NOT possible* for a Gentile nation to dwell in the tents of Shem and possess a God.

For a New Testament reference relative to the preceding, note Eph. 2:12.

Christians possess a God, though this is ONLY because of and through a Jewish Messiah Who came through Israel.

BUT, with Israel in her current state of disobedience and unbelief, the same thing CANNOT presently be true of nations per se.

Thus, from a Biblical standpoint, *it is NOT possible* for any Gentile nation to look upon itself as “one nation under God.” And *that ONE truth*, in reality, forms the central base for understanding *the whole of the Middle East problem.*

At the center of the problem is ISRAEL, the ONLY nation on the face of the earth with a God, a standing which Israel holds even in the nation’s present state of unbelief.

And surrounding this nation with a God are Moslem nations with a governmental system, intermixed with a religious system, with a god who is described in Ps. 96:5, the same place the god of the United States or any other Gentile nation is described during the present day and time.

Israel’s Position Among the Nations

Beyond that, Israel is *God’s firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23), *the ONE and ONLY nation among all the nations which God recognizes as possessing the rights of primogeniture — a firstborn right among nations, which, among other things, includes the right to hold the sceptre, the right to rule.*

Israel is the ONLY nation which God recognizes as possessing these rights, and, with Israel exercising these rights (which the nation *WILL* one day do, though that is far from the case today), *the Gentile nations are NOT ONLY to be ruled by BUT ALSO to be blessed through Israel* (in accordance with Gen. 12:2, 3, realizing another part of the rights of the first-born, the priestly rights).

The Gentile nations today rule under Satan and his angels (in accordance with that seen in Dan. 10:12-20). But Israel, not to be reckoned among the nations, occupies a position separate from this rule (in accordance with that also referenced in this chapter in Daniel, in v. 21).

(On The preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth.*)

Satan knows all these things, and he has been doing and will continue doing everything within his power to prevent the one nation with a God from ever exercising her God-ordained position *as God's firstborn son*. He knows that should this ever occur, *NOT ONLY* would he have to relinquish the sceptre *BUT* conditions relative to Israel and the nations would become as described in Zech. 8:20-23:

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come a people, and the inhabitants of many cities:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also.

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; *In those days it shall come to pass, that TEN men shall take hold out of ALL languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you'.*"

And in an effort to prevent the preceding from ever occurring, Satan and his angels, ruling from a heavenly sphere through the Gentile nations on earth (*ref.* Chs. I-III in this book), have been seeking for decades in the Middle East, through the nations, to bring about that stated in Ps. 83:4:

“Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation;
that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.”

In Psalm chapter eighty-three, ten Gentile nations are seen allying themselves against Israel in the preceding respect, foreshadowing the ten-kingdom confederacy of Gentile nations which will one day rule under Antichrist and ally itself against Israel *in EXACTLY the same manner*.

And There Is More...

Then, as if the preceding wasn't already too much for man to even begin to deal with, there is still more.

There is the matter of Israel being driven out among the nations, because of unbelief, to effect repentance. And a remnant has returned to the land BEFORE the time.

The slayer, “Israel,” typified in Numbers chapter thirty-five, has returned to the land of her possession BEFORE it is time for the nation to return. And, according to the type in Numbers chapter thirty-five, the slayer CANNOT return to the land of her possession BEFORE Christ completes His present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and comes forth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek (*cf.* Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:1-7; Heb. 5:6-10; 6:20; 7:1-21).

And because a remnant has returned BEFORE that time, BEFORE Christ completes His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, a MAJOR Middle East problem has resulted.

It is the age-old story of a disobedient Jonah asleep on board a ship headed away from God's calling and then finding himself in the midst of a raging storm out on the sea, a storm so severe that it struck fear in the hearts of those men on the ship, a storm so severe that it was about to destroy the ship.

That is the picture which Scripture presents of the dire situation in the Middle East today.

(For information on the preceding, refer to the author's books, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!* and *O Sleeper! Arise, Call!*)

Then, as if the preceding addition to the existing problem wasn't enough, add something else. God pictures Israel as *having been wounded, as being sick, because of past disobedience* (Isa. 1:2ff).

And God states concerning Israel's condition in this respect that the One Who brought about this condition (God, because of the nation's disobedience) is *the ONLY One Who can cure the wounded, sick nation* (Hosea 5:13-6:2).

The present nation of Israel in the Middle East is an outgrowth and result of a Zionist movement which began under Theodor Herzl (an ardent Zionist) and others toward the end of the nineteenth century. Then, the catalysts to bring this Zionist movement to fruition were, centrally, events occurring during and following two subsequent world wars, WWI and WWII.

The former provided England with the Mandate to Palestine ("the administration of the territory of Palestine" given to England by the League of Nations in 1922).

And England, prior to this time, had become sympathetic toward the Zionist's aims of a homeland for the dispersed Jew in the land to which they now held the Mandate, resulting in numerous Jews, during particularly the next two decades, returning to the land of Palestine.

And *the latter*, resulting centrally from the actions of the Third Reich in Europe — seeking to produce a Jew-free Europe, slaying some 6,000,000 Jews in the process, in what was subsequently called *The Holocaust* — provided the Jewish people with the type thought and determination which was necessary among themselves and world opinion, to bring about events of May 14, 1948.

On this date, the current Israeli nation was born (the new “State of Israel”). A remnant of Jews, for the first time since Rome had ruled the known world, once again existed as a nation in the Middle East.

And since that time, with Jews worldwide continuously streaming into Israel, the nation to date is above 6,000,000 strong. And it is *this return* of the Jewish people from a world-wide dispersion (referred to through the name, *Aliyah*) that Bible students often associate with the prophesied Biblical return.

The fact of the matter though is that the Jewish people have sought to return *through man’s own power and strength during a time in which the nation remains in disobedience and unbelief*.

God scattered the Jewish people among the Gentile nations *BECAUSE OF disobedience, TO EFFECT repentance*.

However, *an unrepentant and disbelieving remnant has sought to emancipate itself, apart from their Messiah, by returning to the land*.

A nation has resulted, and that nation has grown over the past seventy years to where it comprises a sizeable percentage of the world’s Jewish population (about two-fifths).

A people described in the words of Isa. 1:4-6 (“a people laden with iniquity”) presently reside in the land. And the land itself is described in the verse immediately following, in verse seven (“desolate...strangers devour it”).

Numerous verses in Scripture deal with Israel's restoration (e.g., Deut. 30:1-3; Isa. 1:4-2:5; 6:1-8; Ezek. 36:24ff; 37:21ff; 38:8ff; 39:25ff; Matt. 24:30, 31). And that stated in the text and context of verses of this nature clearly presents *numerous insurmountable problems* for anyone attempting to associate the present return of a remnant with God's promised restoration of His people.

The same prophecies which deal with Israel's restoration also deal with the reason Israel was driven out among the nations (*because of disobedience*), along with *that which MUST occur BEFORE God will remove His people from the nations and place them back in the land — REPENTANCE.*

And the latter has YET to occur.

Thus, in this respect alone, *it is NOT possible* that the return of a remnant *at a time BEFORE repentance occurs* can be looked upon as God restoring the Jewish people in accordance with the numerous Old Testament prophecies.

IF the present restoration of a remnant to the land is the beginning of the prophesied Biblical restoration of the Jewish people to the land, then *God, within this restoration, CAN ONLY be seen acting contrary to His revealed Word, NOT ONLY relative to repentance BUT in numerous other realms as well — an impossibility!*

Aside from the fact that the restoration of the Jewish people *can occur ONLY following Israel's repentance*, this restoration *MUST occur in accordance with the chronology of that foreshadowed by each of the seven Jewish festivals in Leviticus chapter twenty-three (which means that it can ONLY follow Israel's national conversion at the end of the Tribulation).*

This restoration *can occur ONLY after Christ completes His present high priestly ministry in the sanctuary.*

This restoration *can occur ONLY after Christ has returned at the end of the Tribulation.*

This restoration *can occur ONLY after two days, on the third*

day (ONLY after 2,000 years, in the third 1,000-year period, which comprises the Messianic Era [Hosea 5:13-6:2]).

This restoration can occur ONLY after the Times of the Gentiles has been completed.

This restoration can occur ONLY after Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy has been fulfilled (and seven years yet remain to be fulfilled in this prophecy).

(Note that the two days, with the Messianic Era to follow on the third day in Hosea 5:13-6:2, are *JEWISH*. These two days have to do with time in relation to the Jewish people during their two day, 2,000-year, dispensation, *NOT with* time during the current two day, 2,000-year, Christian dispensation. These two days, 2,000 years, cover God's dealing with His people during time extending from Abraham to the Messianic Kingdom, *NOT* time during the subsequent two day, 2,000-year, period, extending from Pentecost to the rapture.

Refer to Appendix I in Volume II of this book, "*Beginning, Heavens, Earth,*" for an understanding of the preceding in relation to Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy.)

The Complete Picture

Thus, the complete Middle East picture, as it exists today, could be succinctly depicted:

On the one hand, God's firstborn son, the one whose right it is to hold the sceptre, the ONLY nation with a God, finds itself wounded and sick in a place where the nation is NOT even supposed to be today, in the midst of Moslem nations, with the nations raging and the whole situation about to tumble completely out of control (cf. Ps. 2:1ff).

THEN, on the other hand, Satan, through existing conditions, is doing ALL within his power to destroy Israel through using the surrounding Gentile nations, which are UNDER his control and sway.

This is WHY there is a situation rapidly becoming uncontrollable, with the nations raging, in the Middle East today.

This is WHY the world heard the cry from Nasser some six decades ago that the primary goal of a war between Egypt and Israel was to drive Israel into the sea, doing away with the nation.

And, as well, *this is WHY* the present ruler of Iran and others are openly and defiantly continuing to call for this same destruction of Israel today.

NONE of the basics behind these things are being taken into account in the nations' endeavors to effect Middle East peace. They *CAN'T* take these basics into account. The intractable Middle East problem has both *a Biblical base* and *a false religious base*, and the nations seeking to effect peace *CANNOT operate in either realm*.

Both bases are *spiritual* and involve *supernatural powers* — one emanating from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the other emanating from the god of this age.

Man's best efforts in either supernatural realm would be as powerless as trying to extinguish the flames of a burning skyscraper with an empty eyedropper.

And even if the nations could operate in the spiritual realm, the nations *COULDN'T* cure Israel of her current condition. *ONLY God can do this*, something which He clearly states that He will do following Israel being brought to *the place of repentance*.

The Middle East *is a powder keg with a burning short fuse*. It is going to blow, and *man CAN'T stop it, for the prophets have spoken*.

This is simply what GOD HAS DECREED that it will ultimately take to bring about Israel's repentance, something that has been in the offing for over 2,600 years of Gentile rule and persecution of Israel.

How soon will it be before the Middle East tumbles completely out of control in the preceding manner? We're not told. So there is no need to speculate. Such would be useless anyway.

Suffice it to say, with the present dispensation almost over, to be followed by the Tribulation, *it is MUCH, MUCH later than most care to think, imagine, or admit.*

Then, There Is Something Else

The preceding outlines the bad news. The preceding shows why a report such as *The Baker-Hamilton Report CAN'T even begin to touch the problem, as it exists.*

And this is not to speak negatively of the report. Rather, it is simply to say, from a Biblical base, as previously outlined, *that there is an existing problem in the Middle East which man CAN'T deal with.*

BUT, there is GOOD news.

The more the matter deteriorates, the brighter things become in another respect. The dawn always follows the darkest hour of the night.

The time is rapidly approaching when the Church will be removed, and after that God will allow conditions to deteriorate to a point, particularly in the Middle East, *where Israel will have NO place to turn OTHER than to the God of their fathers.*

Scripture describes that time as a day "that shall burn as an oven" (Mal. 4:1), and Scripture also speaks of conditions deteriorating during that time to a point where "no flesh" would survive apart from Divine intervention (Matt. 24:22).

It will be the story seen in the Book of Exodus all over again.

Israel, through Gentile persecution, will be brought to the place of repentance, a Deliverer will be sent, Israel will be delivered, BOTH spiritually and physically, and Gentile world power will THEN be destroyed by Israel's Deliverer Himself.

That coming day will see the “Sun of Righteousness” arise “with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2).

Christ will return, Israel will be cured of her wound (her sickness), Gentile world power will be destroyed, and God’s firstborn Sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]) will then exercise the rights of primogeniture, with the Gentile nations being blessed through Israel.

THEN and ONLY THEN will the intractable problem in the Middle East be resolved.

THEN and ONLY THEN will there be peace in the Middle East.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee” (an ALL ENCOMPASSING prayer that the prophesied events leading up to the fulfillment of God’s promises to a repentant Israel would be brought to pass [Ps. 122:6]).

Appendix III

Faith and Works

Justification by Faith, Justification by Works

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?...

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:14, 20-24).

James 2:14-26 has been an enigma over the years for many individuals studying the salvation message in Scripture. But that should not be the case at all, *unless* a person tries to see the salvation which we presently possess — the salvation dealt with in Eph. 2:8, 9 — as the salvation or justification being dealt with in James.

Faith and works in relation to salvation or justification in James is completely consistent with and perfectly in line with the overall salvation message taught elsewhere in Scripture.

James is dealing with the salvation of the soul (James 1:21), *NOT* with the salvation which we presently possess; and, unlike the absence of works in connection with man in the salvation which we presently possess, works are presented after a different fashion in Scriptures dealing with the salvation of the soul, *for man NOW appears in an active rather than a passive sense in the matter.*

In James 2:14, two self-answering questions are asked. The negative used in the Greek text (*me*) necessitates that the two questions be understood in a “no” respect.

A proper translation of the verse into English, with the Greek negative *me* in view, would read along these lines:

“My Brethren, though a man says he has faith, but does not have works, he cannot profit, can he? Faith [*i.e.*, faith apart from works] cannot save him, can it?”

And farther down in the chapter, comments and examples are given concerning faith and works in relation to salvation.

In verse twenty-one, Abraham is seen as having been justified by works when he had offered his son on the altar, as seen in Gen. 22:1ff. And, calling attention to Gen. 15:6, it is further stated in verse twenty-three that Abraham, at this same time, acted by faith; and God reckoned Abraham’s faithfulness to him for righteousness.

The same account, Abraham offering his son, is referenced in Heb. 11:17. And in this verse, *faith to a saving of the soul*, as in James, is inferred from the way this chapter is introduced in the last two verses of the previous chapter.

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul [*lit.*, ‘but of faith to a saving of the soul’]” (10:38, 39).

With these two verses leading into and introducing chapter eleven, providing the subject matter, each reference to “faith” in the chapter should be understood in line with these verses, as *faith to a saving of the soul*.

This chapter, as James 2:14-26, *has to do with present and future aspects of salvation, NOT with the past aspect*. And this chapter, *EXACTLY as in James*, has to do with *faith and works in relation to this salvation*. And, *AS in James, SO in Hebrews* — *the actions of individuals in relation to the salvation of the soul are seen*.

Actually, in Scripture, *there is NO such thing as salvation apart from works*, whether past, present, or future aspects of salvation are in view.

As well, in Scripture, there is no such thing as *salvation apart from grace and faith*. The wording in Eph. 2:8, “by grace...through faith,” would apply *NOT ONLY* to the past aspect of salvation, as seen in this verse, *BUT* to present and future aspects of salvation as well — *the salvation of the soul* (ref. the author’s book, *Salvation of the Soul*).

(Both “grace” and “faith” are seen in relation to the salvation of the soul in I Peter 1:9:

“Receiving the end [‘goal’] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

“Grace” in relation to the salvation of the soul in v. 9 is seen in vv. 2, 10, 13; and “faith” in relation to the salvation of the soul is seen in vv. 5, 7-9.)

The salvation which we presently possess is wrought through Divine works — *the Spirit breathing life into the one having NO life* — and is based on a finished, Divine work, *the finished work of God’s Son*.

Unsaved man is spiritually dead and CANNOT function in the spiritual realm. He can do NO more than allow God to do a work on his behalf.

BUT, once man has passed “from death unto life,” coming into possession of *spiritual life*, he can *THEN* be active in the *spiritual realm*.

And, as the *ruined earth* was able to bring forth in Genesis chapter one after the Spirit of God had moved upon the face of the waters, God had spoken, and light had come into existence (vv. 2b, 3, 11), *ruined man*, as well, is able to bring forth following a Divine work on his behalf (Eph. 2:8-10).

Once man possesses spiritual life and is able to function in the spiritual realm, as in Hebrews chapter eleven or James chapter two, he, as the earth in Gen. 1:11, can *bring forth*. *BUT*, *faith MUST precede and be inseparably connected with man bringing forth, producing works*.

And to understand how this all comes together, *a principle from the Old Testament MUST be understood first*.

An Old Testament Principle

To understand the proper relationship between faith and works in the lives of the people of God, one *MUST* understand a principle set forth a number of places in the Old Testament.

And this principle is presented in a dual sense in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

1) Genesis 18, 19

Genesis chapter eighteen begins with the Lord, accompanied by two angels, appearing to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. The Lord had come down to personally see if the report which He had heard about the things happening in Sodom and Gomorrah was true (vv. 20, 21).

(The Lord, in His omniscience, didn't need to come down in this manner, for He already knew. But this is simply the manner in which Scripture, at times, presents matters of this nature.)

But, though the Lord said, "I will go down," He remained with Abraham while the two angels accompanying Him went on down into the Jordan plain, into Sodom (vv. 21, 22).

In that respect, did the Lord go down into the Jordan plain, as He said that He would? Or did the two angels alone go down into the plain?

To address these questions, note something very similar, presented after a different fashion, in chapter nineteen.

The two angels, having seen first-hand that which was happening in Sodom, told Lot to take his family and leave the city. Sodom, along with three other cities of the plain (Deut. 29:23), was about to be destroyed.

"For we [the two angels] will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it" (v. 13).

Further down in the chapter, after Lot and his family had lingered in the city, the two angels took them by their hands and led them outside the city (vv. 15, 16).

Once this had been done, and Lot and his family were subsequently safe in Zoar, a nearby city which was spared (vv. 17-23):

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (v. 24).

WHO destroyed the cities of the plain? First the angels said that they would destroy Sodom (with the other three cities not mentioned at this point), and they further stated that the Lord had sent them to destroy Sodom.

BUT, at the time of the destruction, the Lord is seen destroying Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other two cities (*cf.* Deut. 29:23).

Did the angels bring about this destruction, as they said they would do? Or did the Lord bring about this destruction, as the text goes on to state?

The principle seen in these two chapters has to do with angels acting under God's established laws, with their actions being seen as the actions of the One Who established these laws.

Thus, matters can be stated either way, as seen in the chapter — *the two angels going down into Sodom is also seen as the Lord going down into Sodom, or the two angels destroying the cities of the plain is also seen as the Lord destroying the cities of the plain.*

God governs the universe through angels in this manner.

Angels, placed by the Lord in regal positions throughout the universe, *govern the universe under established laws. And, through so doing, their actions are seen as the Lord's actions.*

(On God's established laws in the preceding respect, refer to Appendix II in this first volume of the book.)

To see the converse of this, note Satan's actions at the time of his fall.

Satan had been placed over the earth, as the earth's ruler. But the day came when he stepped outside the established laws under which he ruled and, *on his own*, sought to occupy a higher regal position than the one in which God had placed him. *His actions thus ceased to be God's actions, being his own. And this resulted in his fall and subsequent judgment (cf. Isa. 14:12-17; Dan. 4:17, 25).*

2) Numbers 13, 14; Joshua 6-8

This same principle is seen again in the account of the Israelites under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, and again thirty-eight years later under Joshua after the Israelites had crossed the Jordan River.

The Israelites, in both instances, were to go into the land and slay or drive out every single inhabitant (Deut. 7:1ff).

The Israelites, going into the land with this goal in view, were to “diligently keep the commandments of the Lord... his testimonies, and his statutes” (Deut. 6:17). And they were to go into the land *believing that God would do that which He had stated that He would do*:

“And the Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee by little and little: Thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them” (Deut. 7:22-24).

God had commanded His people to go in and take the land, and He had told them what HE would DO as they entered the land to take it.

Going into the land, they were to act completely *by faith, believing God* (cf. Heb. 11:29, 30). And, *remaining in the realm of faith, their actions would be the Lord’s actions.*

Though the Israelites would be slaying the enemy, acting within the realm of faith, the Lord would be slaying the enemy. The Lord would be going ahead of them and delivering the enemy into their hands.

It is the same picture, seen from a different perspective, as the angels acting under established laws in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

Under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea though, failure rather than success is seen. Twelve spies had been sent into the land to spy out the land.

After forty days and nights they brought back a report concerning the land and the people therein — a land flowing with milk and honey, inhabited by a strong people, some of gigantic stature.

Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, then rendered a *positive statement* concerning entering the land, with Caleb calming the people and exhorting them, saying:

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

BUT, the other ten followed with a *negative and false statement* concerning entering the land, saying:

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

The people believed the false statement of the ten spies, began to murmur against Moses, and sought to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4).

And, as a result, in the words of Heb. 6:4-6 (which draws from the account in Num. 13, 14 [cf. Heb. 3:1-4:16]), the Israelites *fell away* at Kadesh-Barnea; and, after they had fallen away, *it was THEN impossible* “to renew them again unto repentance [unto a change of mind (drawing from the type, a change of mind on God’s part, NOT on the part of those who had fallen away)].”

At this point in the account, the Israelites committed a sin referred to in Num. 15:30 as a *presumptuous sin* and in Heb. 10:26 as a *sin for which there was no sacrifice*, with *NOTHING* but judgment then awaiting the nation.

And, because of the particular nature of this sin, *God WASN’T going to repent, God WASN’T going to change His mind* (as previously seen, “repentance” on God’s part, *NOT* man’s part, is seen in the antitype in Heb. 6 as well).

The very next day, the generation of Israelites under Moses repented, changed their minds, and sought to enter the land and defeat the enemy.

BUT, God didn't repent, didn't change His mind. God COULDN'T change His mind and, at the same time, remain true to His Word.

God was *NO longer* among them with respect to their entering and taking the land. God *would NO longer* go before them and deliver the enemy into their hands.

And, as a result, the Israelites attempting to enter the land the next day and overthrow a stronger enemy were themselves overthrown and driven back.

Their actions *were their own, NOT the Lord's* (Num. 14:40-45). And their actions *were performed separate from faith, for they went forth contrary to that which God had told them.*

Thus, defeat, NOT victory, could ONLY have been their lot.

As a result of that which occurred at Kadesh-Barnea, over the next thirty-eight years the entire generation of Israelites twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, died in the wilderness, outside the land.

Then, once these years had passed and those in the previous generation had died, Joshua, about to lead the second generation of Israelites into the land, sent two spies into the land ahead of the nation.

And upon their return, they said to Joshua:

“Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us” (Joshua 2:24).

The Israelites this time, unlike the previous generation under Moses, *believed God and prepared to enter the land and trust the Lord to deliver the enemy into their hands.*

After crossing the Jordan River, the first battle involved the destruction of Jericho. And the Israelites, *believing God,*

experienced victory (Joshua 6:1ff).

The next battle involved the destruction of Ai. The city was not deemed large enough to require the entire Israeli army, so only about three thousand men were sent to take and destroy Ai.

BUT, unlike the battle of Jericho, the Israelites were soundly defeated and driven back, with a number being slain (Joshua 7:1-5).

Joshua, seeking the Lord's face concerning the reason for this defeat, was told by the Lord, "Israel hath sinned..."

Then, seeking that referred to by the Lord, Joshua found an Israelite (Achan) who had kept forbidden spoils from the previous destruction of Jericho.

There was sin, unfaithfulness, in the camp.

The matter was taken care of, and then the inhabitants of Ai could be defeated, with the Lord delivering the city into the Israelites' hands (Joshua 7:6ff).

Thus, as long as the Israelites went forth in the realm of faith, the Lord gave the victory. The battle was the Lord's.

Through THIS means, it could be said that the Israelites destroyed Jericho and Ai, along with their inhabitants; and it could also be said that the Lord destroyed these two cities, along with their inhabitants.

3) 1 Samuel 17

This same principle is seen again in the account of David slaying Goliath.

David was *an unproven "youth"* in battle (probably in his late teens), going up against "a man of war from his youth." This man of war, Goliath, was the Philistine army's champion and stood between nine and ten feet tall (1 Sam. 17:4, 33).

Goliath, to meet David, *came out with full armor, carrying a spear and a sword, with a shield-bearer moving with him.*

The coat on his armor alone weighed about one hundred twenty-five pounds and the head of the spear weighed about fifteen pounds (I Sam. 17:5-7, 41ff).

On the other hand, David *refused to wear armor as he went forth, for "he had not proved" himself in battle.* He went forth to meet Goliath *WITHOUT armor or a shield-bearer and with ONLY a sling and five smooth stones* which he had picked up in a nearby brook and placed in his bag (I Sam. 17:39, 40).

He though would need *NO* armor or shield-bearer and would need *ONLY* one of the five stones.

And the reason is seen within David's words to this gigantic champion of the Philistine army:

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from off thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands" (I Sam. 17:45-47).

David went forth *by faith.* He went forth believing God, knowing that God would remain true to His Word and deliver the Philistine into his hands.

Acting apart from the Lord, David would have been powerless. He would have easily been defeated and slain by the Philistine.

BUT, acting by faith, David could ONLY be victorious; acting by faith, David easily defeated the Philistine champion.

David slew Goliath. BUT, it could also be said that the Lord slew Goliath.

It is the same principle seen in the actions of the two angels in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

Acting under established laws, the actions of these angels were seen as the Lord's actions; and *acting by faith*, David's actions were seen as the Lord's actions.

Thus, comparing these accounts in Genesis, Numbers, Joshua, and I Samuel, *acting by faith CAN ONLY be seen as acting under an established, Divine law which CANNOT change.*

From Faith to Faith

"Faith" is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter.*

And, in the realm of *faith and works*, acting by faith is *NOT* acting in a realm where one seeks to go out to do a work for the Lord. Rather, acting by faith is *completely stepping aside from one's own self and allowing the Lord to do a work through the one exercising faith.*

And the work done through the one exercising faith *will be the Lord's work; it will be a work emanating out of faith and performed in the spiritual realm, completely apart from the man of flesh.*

The Christians' works tried at the judgment seat will fall into two categories, described by "gold, silver, precious stones" and "wood, hay, stubble" (I Cor. 3:12ff).

The former works (described by "gold, silver, precious stones") *will emanate out of faith and will be works which the Lord performed through the individual.* These works will endure the testing through fire, for they will be *the Lord's works.*

The latter works (described by "wood, hay, stubble"), on the other hand, *will be those performed separate from faith, by the individual himself, through the energy of the flesh.* The Lord will have had *NOTHING* to do with them, and they will be burned by the fire.

The Christian life is one where *two things MUST be operable throughout*: “grace” and “faith.”

“Grace” can be defined as *that which God is able to do entirely apart from human intervention*. And “faith,” as previously seen, is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter*.

If one moves outside the realm of “grace,” he moves outside the realm where God can be active in his life, for God always acts in the realm of grace.

And if one moves outside the realm of “faith,” he moves outside the realm where he can be acceptable to God, or where God can be pleased with his actions (Heb. 11:6).

As previously shown, both “grace” and “faith” are seen operable *NOT ONLY* in the salvation which we presently possess (Eph. 2:8, 9) *BUT ALSO* in the salvation of the soul, the present and future aspects of salvation (I Peter 1:2ff; cf. James 2:14-26).

Thus, it should be a simple matter to see and understand that “grace” and “faith” *MUST always be operable at any point in the overall salvation message* — past, present, or future.

Man has been saved by grace through faith; man is being saved by grace through faith; and man is about to be saved by grace through faith.

But, since man’s works *CANNOT* enter into the realm where God’s grace exists, how can grace and works co-exist in connection with the saving of the soul in James 2:14ff?

Note Rom. 11:6:

“And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”

It is *man’s works which CANNOT enter* (Eph. 2:8), *NOT God’s works*. And *God’s works MUST ALWAYS enter into the matter*.

Note *salvation by grace* which we presently possess:

God's works, NOT man's works, MUST be seen throughout, with man COMPLETELY passive, NOT active.

Then note *salvation by grace* in the continuing aspect of salvation:

God's works, NOT Man's works, MUST likewise be seen throughout, though man, NOW MUST be active, NOT passive.

Romans 4:1-4 clearly reveals that *works emanating from the flesh, from man* (vv. 1, 2) CANNOT enter into the realm of either "faith" (v. 3) or "grace" (v. 4). The works *MUST be God's works being performed through an individual exercising "faith,"* as in James 2:21-24 and Heb. 11:17.

And since they are *God's works, "grace" can enter into the matter;* and since they are *works being done through man, "judgment" on the basis of works can occur.*

Judgment on the basis of works will separate that performed *by faith* (God's works performed through the one exercising faith) from that performed *apart from faith* (man's works performed in the energy of the flesh, apart from God).

The difference in the two types of works will be "revealed by ['in'] fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

Works emanating out of faith *will remain;* they *will endure* the fire.

BUT, works performed apart from faith *will be destroyed;* they *will be burned* by the fire (I Cor. 3:11-15).

Remaining works will result in that which awaits the faithful; and *burned works* will result in that which awaits the unfaithful.

Appendix IV

Saul and David, Satan and Christ

Type Antitype

Transfer of Power & Authority, FROM Angels TO Man

When Christ returns to the earth at the conclusion of the Tribulation, *He will have many crowns upon His head* (Rev. 19:12).

But these crowns, through comparing this section in Revelation with other Scriptures on the subject, *are NOT crowns which Christ will wear during the Messianic Era. Christ is destined to wear the crown which Satan presently wears; and at the time Christ returns to the earth, Satan will STILL be in possession of his crown.*

Satan's crown will have to be taken from him (by force) and possessed by Christ *BEFORE* Christ can actually sit upon the throne and occupy, in its fullest sense, the position depicted in Rev. 19:16: "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Type, Antitype, I, II Samuel

Certain things concerning *crowns*, especially relative to the *crown* which Christ is to wear, can possibly best be illustrated by referring to the typology of Saul and David in the Books of I, II Samuel.

Saul had been anointed king over Israel, but Saul rebelled against the Lord and was rejected (as king) by the Lord (I Sam. 10:1ff; 15:1-23). David was then anointed king in Saul's stead (I Sam. 16:1-13).

However, Saul *did NOT* immediately relinquish the throne; *NOR* did David make an attempt to immediately ascend the throne. Saul, even though rejected, with his anointed successor on hand, was allowed to continue his reign.

And affairs continued after this fashion in the camp of Israel, unchanged, with David eventually finding himself in exile, living out in the hills (e.g., in the cave of Adullam).

During this time, certain individuals who were dissatisfied with existing conditions in the camp of Israel under Saul gathered themselves unto David (I Sam. 22:1, 2).

They separated themselves from affairs in the kingdom under Saul and lived out in the hills with David. He became "a captain over them"; *and they were faithful to him, anticipating the day when Saul would be put down and David would take the kingdom.*

The day eventually came when this occurred. Saul, following a battle and an attempted suicide, was slain by an Amalekite.

His crown was taken and given to David (I Sam. 31:1-13; II Sam. 1:1-10). *THEN, David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government* (II Sam. 2:1ff).

The entire sequence of events depicting Saul and David typifies great spiritual truths concerning Satan and Christ:

JUST AS Saul was anointed king over Israel, Satan was anointed king over the earth.

JUST AS Saul rebelled against the Lord and was rejected, Satan rebelled against the Lord and was rejected.

JUST AS David was anointed king while Saul continued to reign, Christ was anointed King while Satan continued to reign.

JUST AS David *did NOT* immediately ascend the throne, Christ *did NOT* immediately ascend the throne.

JUST AS David eventually found himself in a place removed from the kingdom (out in the hills), Christ eventually found Himself in a place removed from the kingdom (heaven).

JUST AS David gathered certain faithful men unto

himself during this time (anticipating his future reign), Christ is presently gathering certain faithful men unto Himself (anticipating His future reign).

JUST AS the day came when Saul was *put down*, the day will come when Satan *will be put down*.

JUST AS Saul's crown was taken and given to David, Satan's crown will be taken and given to Christ.

JUST AS David and his faithful followers *THEN* moved in and took over the government, Christ and His faithful followers will *THEN* move in and take over the government.

Purpose for the Present Dispensation

A principle of Biblical government set forth in the type of Saul and David shows the necessity of an incumbent ruler, though rejected, continuing to reign until replaced by his successor.

The government of the earth is a rule under God through delegated powers and authorities, positioned by God Himself in time past.

In this respect, Satan rules directly under God (though a rebel ruler), and a great host of subordinate angels rule with him.

Even though Satan and his followers have been rejected, *they MUST continue in power (as Saul and those ruling with him) UNTIL they are replaced by Christ and His faithful followers (as when David and his faithful followers took the kingdom).*

God will *NOT, at ANY time*, allow conditions to exist upon the earth *in which there is no Divinely administered government through delegated powers and authorities*. Even though Satan's action resulted in governmental disarray and a ruined kingdom (the earth, "without form and void" [Gen. 1:2a]), *it is STILL under God's sovereign power and control* (Dan. 4:17-34).

The present dispensation is *the time* during which the antitype of David's faithful followers being gathered unto him occurs.

As during David's time, so during the present time — there MUST be a period, preceding the King coming into power, during which the rulers are acquired, called out (synonymous with the bride presently being acquired).

David's men were the ones who occupied positions of power and authority with him after he took Saul's crown.

Thus will it be when Christ takes Satan's crown.

Those who are being called out during the present time are the ones who will occupy positions of power and authority with Him during that coming day.

Satan will be allowed to continue his reign *UNTIL* God's purpose for this present dispensation has been accomplished. *THEN*, he and those ruling with him *will be put down*, and an entirely *NEW* order of rulers will take the kingdom.

Christ will enter into the position previously occupied by Satan, and Christians will enter into positions previously occupied by angels ruling under Satan.

And since Christ (replacing Satan) will wear the crown presently worn by Satan, it only naturally follows that Christians (replacing subordinate powers and authorities) will wear crowns presently worn by angels ruling under Satan.

ALL of these are crowns which NEITHER Christ NOR Christians can come into possession of UNTIL Satan and his angels have been put down at the end of the Tribulation.

(Crowns worn by angels who had refused to follow Satan in his attempted coup is dealt with in the continuing section.)

Angelic Rule About to End

The originally established angelic rule over the earth has continued uninterrupted since the beginning, preceding

man's existence on the earth. However, with the creation of Adam, God announced that *a change was in the offing*. Man, an entirely new creation, *made after the image and likeness of God, was brought into existence to take the governmental reins of a restored earth* (Gen. 1:2b-28).

But the first man (the first Adam), through sin, was disqualified, necessitating the appearance of the second Man (the last Adam) to effect redemption and the ultimate realization for man's creation.

The price has been paid, but redemption includes FAR, FAR MORE than that which presently exists. Redemption includes the COMPLETE MAN (body, soul, and spirit), it includes the EARTH (presently under a curse), and the GOAL of redemption will be realized ONLY when man has been brought back into the position for which he was created (ruling over a restored earth [Rev. 5ff]).

Scripture clearly attests to the fact that the "world ['inhabited world'] to come" *will NOT be placed "in subjection" to angels* (Heb. 2:5). *Man is the one to whom power and authority will be delegated in THAT day.*

This is clearly seen through the action of the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:10, *removing themselves from their thrones (v. 4) and casting their crowns before God's throne* (an act sequentially placed between the judgment of Christians [chs. 1-3] and the redemption of the inheritance, the earth [chs. 5ff]).

And their action *can ONLY be with a view to the fact that the government of the earth, at this point in the sequence of events depicted in the book, is ABOUT to CHANGE hands.*

These twenty-four crowned elders *can ONLY be a representative group of heavenly beings (angels) who, up to this time, had held positions within a sphere of governmental power and authority relative to the earth. And at this point in the book, through the action of these elders, the way will be opened for God to transfer the government of the earth FROM the hands of angels TO the hands of man.*

(These crowns are cast before God's throne [cf. 4:1-4; 5:1-7] because *the Father ALONE* is the One Who places and/ or removes rulers in His kingdom [Dan. 4:17-37; 5:18-21].

He ALONE is the One Who placed those represented by the twenty-four elders in the positions which they occupied; and *He ALONE* is the One Who will place individuals in particular positions in the kingdom of Christ [Dan. 4:17, 23-25; Matt. 20:20-23].

These crowns cast before God's throne *can ONLY have to do with the government of the earth*. And, at this point in the book, they can be worn by *angels ALONE, for the Son will NOT YET have taken the kingdom* [cf. Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15].

These crowns are relinquished to God at this time [*with a view to MAN, rather than angels, ruling in the kingdom*] so that He can appoint those who had previously been shown qualified at events surrounding the judgment seat [chs. 1-3] to positions of power and authority; and those whom God appoints will wear these crowns in Christ's kingdom.)

The transfer of the government of the earth, *from the hands of angels into the hands of man*, in reality, is what the first nineteen chapters in the Book of Revelation are about; and, as well, this is what the whole of Scripture preceding these nineteen chapters is also about.

In this respect, these twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne forms a *KEY event* which one must grasp if he would properly understand the Book of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

Christ and His bride, in that coming day, will rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. And, in the process of ruling in this manner, they will wear *ALL the crowns* worn by Satan and his angels prior to Satan's fall.

Thus, that which is depicted through the action of the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:10, 11 is *contextually self-explanatory*.

The action of these elders can ONLY have to do with the GOVERNMENT of the EARTH (the underlying thought behind the redemption of the inheritance, the earth). And, as previously seen, contextually, this occurs at a time following events surrounding the judgment seat (chs. 1-3) but preceding Christ redeeming the inheritance (chs. 5ff); and it occurs at a time when Satan's reign is about to be brought to a close.

ALL is REGAL!

After events in Revelation chapters one through three have come to pass, *for the FIRST time in man's history*, the person (the bride) who is to rule with the One to replace Satan (Christ) will have been made known and shown forth. And events in the fourth chapter reflect that fact.

Again, Only ONE thing could possibly be in view at this point in the book, for the bride will *NOT ONLY* have been made known *BUT* will be ready for events surrounding the transfer of power to begin.

The twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne *can ONLY* depict *the angels who did NOT go along with Satan in his rebellion*; and they will *WILLINGLY* relinquish their crowns, with a view to those comprising the bride wearing these crowns during the Messianic Era.

But the crowns worn by Satan and those angels presently ruling with him are another matter. These crowns will have to be taken from Satan and his angels *by FORCE* when Christ returns to overthrow Gentile world power at the end of the Tribulation (a power exercised during Man's Day under Satan and his angels [Dan. 10:13-20]).

The identity *of the twenty-four elders* is shown *NOT ONLY* by their actions and the place in which this occurs in the book *BUT also* by their *number*. Comparing Revelation chapters four and twelve (4:4, 10, 11; 12:3, 4), it appears evident that the government of the earth — originally established by God prior to Satan's fall — was representatively shown

by three sets of twelve, thirty-six crowned rulers (“three” is the number of *Divine perfection*, and “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*).

Those angels who did not follow Satan in his attempt to exalt his throne would be represented by the twenty-four elders — *two sets of twelve, showing two-thirds of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan*. And the angels who did go along with Satan, presently ruling with him, would be represented by a *third set of twelve, showing the other one-third of the original contingent of angels ruling with Satan* (Rev. 12:3, 4).

In this respect, these three representative sets of twelve would show *Divine perfection in the earth’s government*. And, also in this respect, this same perfection in the structure of the earth’s government *has NOT existed since Satan’s attempt to exalt his throne*.

But, this structured perfection *WILL one day AGAIN exist in the earth’s government*. When Christ and His bride ascend the throne together, crowns worn by those represented by all three sets of twelve will be brought together again.

THEN, Divine perfection will ONCE AGAIN exist in the government of the one province in God’s universe where imperfection has existed for millenniums.

Stephanos, Diadema

There are two words in the Greek text of the New Testament which are translated “crown” in English versions. The first and most widely used word is *stephanos* (or the verb form, *stephanoo*), referring to a “victor’s crown” or a crown denoting certain types of “worth” or “valor.” The other word is *diadema*, referring to a crown denoting “regal authority,” “kingly power.”

Stephanos (or the verb form, *stephanoo*) is the only word used for “crown” in the New Testament outside the Book of Revelation.

This, for example, is the word used referring to the “crown of thorns” placed upon Christ’s head immediately preceding His crucifixion (Matt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5).

This is also the word used throughout the Pauline epistles, referring to “crowns” awaiting faithful Christians (I Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19; II Tim. 2:5; 4:8).

The writer of Hebrews used this word (the verb form, *stephanoo*) referring to positions which will ultimately be occupied by Christ and His co-heirs in “the world [‘inhabited world’] to come” (2:5, 7, 9).

James, Peter, and John also used *stephanos* in this same sense (James 1:12; I Peter 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11).

Then John used the word six additional times in the Book of Revelation in several different senses (4:4, 10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14).

Diadema, the other word used for “crown” in the New Testament, appears only three times; and all three occurrences are in the latter part of the Book of Revelation (12:3; 13:1; 19:12).

The first two references have to do with power and authority possessed by incumbent earthly rulers immediately preceding and within the kingdom of Antichrist, and the latter reference has to do with power and authority which Christ will possess at the time He returns and takes the kingdom.

The way in which these two words are used in the New Testament relative to the government of the earth *MUST be borne in mind if one is to properly understand the Scriptural distinction between the use of stephanos and diadema.*

Diadema (referring to the monarch’s crown) *is used ONLY where one has actually entered into and is presently exercising regal power.*

But Stephanos is NEVER used in this respect.

The word appears in all other occurrences, covering any instance where the word “crown” is used *apart from the pres-*

ent possession of regal power (though the possession of such power at a past or future date *can be in view through the use of stephanos* [e.g., note Christ wearing a *stephanos* in Matt. 27:29; Rev. 14:14]).

Then, as previously seen, *diadema* is used when one actually comes into possession of this power.

An understanding of the distinction between *stephanos* and *diadema* will reveal certain things about the twenty-four elders which could not otherwise be known.

They each cast a *stephanos* before the throne, not a *diadema*. This shows that they *were NOT then* occupying regal positions, though crowned and seated on thrones.

At one time they would have occupied such positions (wearing *diadems*); but with the disarray in the governmental structure of the earth, resulting from Satan's rebellion, they ceased exercising regal power (for, not participating in his rebellion, they no longer retained active positions in his rule).

Their crowns could then be referred to *ONLY* through the use of the word *stephanos*; and these crowns would, of necessity, have to be retained *UNTIL the time of Rev. 4:10*.

In this respect, overcoming Christians have been promised a *stephanos* (victor's crown), *NEVER* a *diadema* (monarch's crown); *BUT, the promised stephanos WILL become a diadema at the time overcoming Christians assume positions on the throne with Christ.*

There can be NO such thing as either Christ or His co-heirs wearing a stephanos in that day. They can ONLY wear the type crown referred to by the word diadema.

Then, note that the One Who, in time past, wore a crown of thorns (a *stephanos*), will one day come forth with *many diadems* upon His head, *for the Father will NOT ONLY have delivered the kingdom into His Son's hands BUT the Son will, at that time, have a consort queen and be ready to ascend the throne* (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 19:7-9).

And because of this, when He comes forth, the announcement can be sounded for all to hear: “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16).

(Crowns to be worn by Christ and His bride, in that coming day, will include the crowns relinquished willingly in Rev. 4:10 [evidently the crowns on Christ’s head in Rev. 19:12, which can, at this point in the book, be referred to as *diadems*] and the crowns subsequently taken by force from Satan and his angels.

Also, note that the word translated “elders” is *presbuteroi* in the Greek text. *Presbuteroi* means “older ones” [thus, the translation, “elders”]. *And since the government of the earth is CENTRALLY in view [crowns, thrones, subject of the book], these presbuteroi could ONLY be OLDER ONES in RELATION to THIS GOVERNMENT.*

The word, *presbuteros* [singular form] is used fifty-five times in the N.T. and is *ALWAYS used relative to the position of an individual in relation to the subject at hand* — older in age, position in the family, position in Jewish life, position in the Church, etc. [Matt. 15:2; Acts 2:17; 4:5-8; 20:17; I Tim. 5:1, 2, 17, 19].

And the matter *could be NO different* in relation to the twenty-four crowned elders seated on thrones. Again, *they could ONLY be OLDER ONES in RELATION to THAT which is in view, the GOVERNMENT of the EARTH.*

In the preceding respect, the name *presbuteroi ALONE* would identify these elders as *angels associated with Satan at some distant time in the past* [the “past” shown by the type crown which they are seen wearing — no longer a monarch’s crown, no longer reigning].

And their number [twenty-four], place where they appear in the book [following events at the judgment seat], and action [relinquishing their crowns to the One Who had originally given these crowns to them] *ONLY further confirm their identity.*)

Christ, at the time of the announcement in Rev. 19:16, will have *entered into His long-awaited regal position*. And the first order of business in this respect will be a putting down of the Beast, the kings of the earth (Gentile world power, as it will exist in that day), and Satan and his angels (Rev. 19:17-20:3).

Satan and his angels CANNOT be allowed to reign beyond the point Christ assumes regal power. Their crowns (diadems) MUST, at THIS time, be taken and given to others — those to whom they will THEN rightfully belong.

Appendix V

The Mandate Given to Adam

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Also, it MUST be understood that the Bible deals with fruit-bearing in relation to TIME, which has to do with the LAST age (the LAST 1,000 years) of the PRESENT heavens and earth, NOT with the unending cycle of ages in relation to the new heavens and the new earth beyond.

For information on the seven parables in Matt. 13, refer to the author's book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom.*

For information on fruit-bearing relative to "time" and "the last age" of the present heavens and earth, refer to Appendix I in Volume II of this book.

As well, refer to Appendix II in Volume II of this book, which deals with *the DIRECTION toward which ALL Scripture moves, finding its CONSUMMATION in the last age of the present heavens and earth, NOT the unending cycle of ages associated with the new heavens and new earth.)*

Man's CREATION and FALL had to do with the EARTH and REGALITY, associated with a SEVENTH day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fruit-Bearing — Adam, Israel, Christians

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

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

BUT, EXACTLY WHAT is “fruit-bearing?”

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

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

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

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

1) Adam

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

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

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

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

Note again this mandate in verse twenty-eight:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) Israel

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

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

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

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

So, WHAT happened?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israel, over the years, *HAD brought* forth fruit, *BUT* what kind of fruit?

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

forth “wild grapes” (v. 2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3) *Christians*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THEN, after ALL these things have been accomplished, the Son, with those whom the Spirit will have procured to reign with Him [those who, under the leadership of the Spirit, had been fruitful, had multiplied, and had filled the earth] will RULE "in the midst" of His SUBDUED enemies (cf. Luke 19:11-27).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Church in the World Today

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

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

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

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

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

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

For a more complete discussion of the word “signified,” refer back to Ch. I in this volume of the book, pp. 8, 9.)

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

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

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

1) *Properly Dealing with the Issue*

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

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

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

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

That would be to ask:

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) *Death and Shed Blood, an Inheritance*

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

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

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

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

The former HAD to occur BEFORE the latter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And did *ALL* eat the same spiritual meat;

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

Note the use of “*ALL*” five times.

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) *Expectation of Fruit-Bearing Throughout*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) *Ramifications of Error*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) *The Four Gospels and Acts*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BUT, WAIT a minute!

WHAT is the contextual setting of John chapter three?

WHAT did Nicodemus really say in his opening statement?

HOW did Jesus respond?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) *The Epistles*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

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

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

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

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

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

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