



Prophecy on Mount Olivet

“When Shall These Things Be...?”

**A Study About End-Time
Events Having to Do with
the Jews, the Christians,
and the Gentiles**

Arlen L. Chitwood

To properly understand the message which Christ delivered to His disciples, recorded in Matt. 24, 25, one must understand the overall framework of events in the four gospels. The subject at hand throughout the gospels is *the King and the proffered Kingdom*.

With the King present in Israel's midst, the Kingdom of the Heavens (the heavenly portion of the Messianic Kingdom — a rule from the heavens over the earth) was *offered to and rejected by Israel*. And with Israel's rejection, *the kingdom of the heavens was taken from the nation with a view to the kingdom being offered to a separate and distinct "nation."*

The house of Israel, rejecting the King and the Kingdom, was then left *desolate* (Matt. 21:33-43; 23:38, 39).

The discourse which Christ delivered on Mount Olivet was given immediately following His pronouncement of desolation upon the house of Israel, two days prior to the time Israel would climax the nation's rejection by crucifying "Jesus, the King of the Jews" (*cf.* Matt. 23:38; 26:2; 27:37).

Christ had previously mentioned the Church, anticipating that which was about to occur (Matt. 16:18). He then alluded to the previously mentioned Church (though the Church was not yet in existence) shortly before His discourse on Mount Olivet as the "nation" which would be allowed to bring forth fruit in the realm where Israel had failed (Matt. 21:43; *cf.* Matt. 21:18, 19; I Peter 2:9, 10). And the Church was about to be called into existence to be *the recipient of that which had been rejected by and taken from Israel*.

Christ's discourse on Mount Olivet takes into account *ALL things which had previously occurred during His earthly ministry* (anticipating the existence of the Church) and concerns *NOT ONLY Israel and the Church BUT also the Gentile nations*.

This discourse, delivered in a tripartite manner, deals:

- 1) With *the house of Israel* (apart from the kingdom of the heavens) during and following the Tribulation (24:4-39).

- 2) With *the Church* (in relation to the kingdom of the heavens) during and following the present dispensation (24:40-25:30).

- 3) With *the saved out of the Gentile nations* (in relation to the kingdom) following the Tribulation (25:31-46).

*Prophecy
on
Mount Olivet*

"When Shall These Things Be...?"

The prophecy which Christ delivered to His disciples on Mount Olivet has three sections:

- 1) A Jewish section (24:4-39).
- 2) A Christian section (24:40-25:30).
- 3) A Gentile section (25:31-46).

The prophecy, thus, deals with all three divisions of mankind, beginning with *the Jewish people* (cf. Rom. 1:16); and the prophecy, in all three sections, leads into Christ's return and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

With respect to these three divisions of mankind, Scripture states:

“Give none offence [‘Be not offensive’], neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32).

When reading and studying Christ's prophecy on Mount Olivet, whether studying the Jewish section, the Christian section, or the Gentile section, *Israel MUST be seen as occupying center-stage — something which MUST be seen when reading and studying any other portion of Scripture as well.*

Remove Israel from the center of the picture, and you really won't have a picture; but place Israel at the center, let Scripture fill in the details, and *a completely Biblically correct picture — the only way one can possibly derive a picture of this nature — will begin to develop and unfold before your eyes.*

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by
Arlen L. Chitwood

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INTRODUCTION

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:37-39).

The nation of Israel spurned the offer of the kingdom of the heavens at Christ’s first coming. The reason for this rejection is, in Matthew chapter twenty-three, attributed directly to the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees during the time of Christ’s earthly ministry.

The Scribes and Pharisees, the most numerous of all the religious sects in Israel, controlling the religious life of the people by their very numbers, *sat in Moses’ seat* (v. 2). The shadow of regality still remained in the Divine Law even though the theocracy had long since been taken from Israel, and the Scribes were the keepers and the Pharisees the legalistic teachers of this Law. They, occupying this position on Moses’ seat, were the ones who “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against [‘before,’ *i.e.*, ‘in the presence of’] men.” They were not going to enter this kingdom; and they did all within their power to prevent the nation itself from entering, ultimately resulting in the kingdom being taken from Israel (v. 13; *cf.* Matt. 21:33-43).

Because of that which the Scribes and Pharisees did, they experienced a condemnation at the hands of Christ unlike that which befell any other group. Time after time Christ said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees...” (vv. 13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29). He called them “hypocrites,” “blind guides,” “fools,” and likened them unto “whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (vv. 14, 16, 17, 19, 23-29).

The Scribes and Pharisees were the “children of them which killed the prophets” (v. 31). Israeli history from Moses to Christ is marked throughout by rejection, unbelief; and the Scribes and Pharisees formed a terminal group of the nation’s religious leaders in this respect.

The Scribes and Pharisees were the ones who had *filled up* “the measure” of their fathers (v. 32; *cf.* Gen. 15:16). They were the ones present when Israel’s Messiah appeared with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation; and they were the ones directly responsible for the nation rejecting *the King* and *the Kingdom*, resulting in the crucifixion of the King, continued unbelief, and continued rejection of the Lord’s prophets (v. 34; *cf.* Matt. 21:33-42).

And because of these things, resulting in a *terminal facet of unbelief and rejection under the leadership of the Scribes and Pharisees*, the Lord announced that “all the righteous blood shed upon the earth” (going all the way back to Abel) would come, not only upon the Scribes and Pharisees, but upon the nation as a whole (vv. 34-36).

It is this rejection and unbelief by Israel (attributed to the actions of their religious leaders) and the consequent condemnation brought against Israel (again, attributed to the actions of their religious leaders) that prompted the Lord’s *lament over Jerusalem* and His statement concerning the nation’s coming *desolation* in verses thirty-seven through thirty-nine. The “house” (*house of Israel* [which included the people, the Temple, the city, and the land]) was to be left “desolate.”

The word “desolate” is a translation of *eremos* in the Greek text, which means “desert,” “wilderness,” “waste land.” Because of the previous actions of those who sat in Moses’ seat, this is how the house of Israel was to be left. Rather than entering into what is termed in Heb. 2:3, “so great salvation” (a salvation in connection with the kingdom of the heavens, previously open to Israel), *desolation* would instead be the nation’s lot; and, as revealed in related Scripture, this desolation would not end until two millenniums had run their course.

And this desolation, at the end of two millenniums, would be climaxed by the nation going through the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), the coming Tribulation. Only then would the nation be removed from this condition.

The establishment of the new state of Israel May 14, 1948 wrought *NO change* in Israel’s condition as depicted in Matt. 23:38; *NOR* has

any change been effected during the intervening years since. Almost two-fifths of world Jewry constitutes what is presently called “the nation of Israel” (rather than “the new state of Israel” as it was called at the time of its inception); and those now in Israel are there under a Zionistic movement in unbelief, without a Temple, sacrifices, etc.

Although the Jews will rebuild their Temple during the days of Antichrist and reinstitute at least a segment of the Mosaic Economy in connection with the Temple worship and Jewish life, such will bring about *NO change* to Israel’s desolate condition. *Unbelief* will still prevail; Israel will still exist apart from her Messiah.

The desolation CANNOT be lifted until that day Israel states concerning her rejected Messiah, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (v. 39).

Israel is going to have to pass through the Great Tribulation before that time when the nation calls the Lord Jesus Christ, “Blessed.” This is what the first part of Matthew chapter twenty-four, continuing the line of thought from chapter twenty-three, is all about — *Israel in the Tribulation, brought to a repentant state, followed by deliverance.*

As the Israelites during Moses’ day were forced to cry out to God “by reason of the bondage” under which the Assyrian Pharaoh had placed them, so will the Israelites under the future Assyrian, the Antichrist. This man will bring Israel into such dire straits through his efforts to destroy the nation that the Jewish people will cry out to the God of their fathers. And as God heard, remembered, and sent Moses back to the Jewish people in the past, He will hear, remember, and send Jesus back to the Jewish people yet future.

At that future time, just as Moses was received, so will Jesus be received; and, as deliverance was effected through Moses (beginning with the blood of the paschal lambs), deliverance will be effected through Jesus (beginning with the blood of the Passover Lamb).

(Note that *deliverance MUST begin through the appropriation of the blood.* This is set forth in the original type in Genesis chapter three, it holds true in Exodus chapter twelve, and it holds true at all other places in Scripture.

In the prophetic calendar of Israel, set forth in the festivals of the Lord in Leviticus chapter twenty-three, *the Passover comes FIRST. The blood MUST be appropriated FIRST.*)

According to Hosea 5:15-6:2, it will be “after two days,” during the nation’s time of “affliction [the coming Great Tribulation],” that the Jewish people will say:

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up” (6:1).

And it will be “in the third day” that Israel will be *raised up* to “live in his [the Lord’s] sight” (6:2). Each day in this passage is one thousand years in length (II Peter 3:8). *Desolation* is to prevail for two thousand years, extending into and through the Great Tribulation.

THEN, at the outset of the third one-thousand-year period — dating from Abraham, covering the entire 2,000 years of the Jewish dispensation, with the seven years of the coming Tribulation completing this dispensation — Israel will be restored. The last of the triad of days, the last of the triad of one-thousand-year periods, will be the Messianic Era; and it will be *during THIS time* that Israel will say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:39).

(Note that Hosea 5:13-6:3 is *Jewish*, having to do with the Jewish dispensation [extending from the birth of Abraham to the Messianic Kingdom]. The Messianic Kingdom — the third day, the third one thousand years — is ushered in at the conclusion of this dispensation, not at the conclusion of the present dispensation [the Christian dispensation in which we presently live].

The present dispensation occurs while time is not being marked off in the Jewish dispensation, with seven years left to complete the Jewish dispensation. God has, so to speak, stopped the clock marking off time in the Jewish dispensation and has begun an entirely new dispensation in his dealings with man.

And once His plans and purposes for this new dispensation have been completed [calling out a bride for His Son, taken mainly from the Gentiles (Gen. 24:1ff)], He will turn back to Israel and complete the last seven years of the previous dispensation [the Jewish dispensation], with the Messianic Era then being ushered in at the completion of this dispensation [Dan. 9:24-27; *cf.* Gen. 23:1ff; 25:1ff].)

During that coming third day, during the Messianic Era, the Jewish people will voice the nation’s confession as outlined in Isa. 53:1ff:

“Who hath believed our report...

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant...and when we [the Jewish people] shall see him [Jesus], there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men...and we hid as it were our faces from him...

Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...” (vv. 1-5).

It will be in that day that the Jewish people will say:

“Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name [the name, ‘Jesus’], and to the remembrance of thee” (Isa. 26:8).

During the present time of desolation, Israel hates the name “Jesus”; but in the latter days of this desolation, when iniquity once again becomes full and corresponding judgment falls (*cf.* Gen. 15:16), the Jewish people will cry out for deliverance. This deliverance will be effected through none other than Jesus. And following this deliverance, when the house of Israel no longer lies desolate, the prophecies concerning the relationship which Jesus and Israel are to enter into (as foretold in Isa. 26:8; 53:1ff) will come to pass.

BUT, UNTIL THEN — desolation.

Three Parts

The Olivet Discourse is a tripartite, connected discourse dealing with *the Jews, the Christians, and the Gentiles*. The inception of Christianity *awaited* a future date at this time; but the discourse — given *following* Christ’s statement that He would build His Church (ch. 16), *following* the kingdom of the heavens being taken from Israel (ch. 21), and *following* the announced desolation of the house of Israel (ch. 23) — anticipated the “one new man” *in Christ* being brought into existence.

The first part has to do with the “Jews” (24:4-39).

The second part has to do with “Christians” (24:40-25:30).

The third part has to do with the “Gentiles” (25:31-46).

The first part of the discourse deals with events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation and with Messiah's return and the restoration of the nation at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom and was about to crucify the nation's rejected Messiah, and now the nation *MUST* pass through the Great Tribulation and await her Messiah "in the way of thy judgments" (Isa. 26:8).

The second part of the discourse deals with the new recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. The emphasis throughout this section is upon present faithfulness in view of a future time of reckoning, anticipating the kingdom.

The third part of the discourse deals with judgment upon saved Gentiles (saved during the Tribulation) following Christ's return at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

In this fashion, the three sections of the Olivet Discourse reveal God's dealings with the three segments of mankind — *Jew, Christian, and Gentile* — during and at the conclusion of the present age.

In the Jewish section of this discourse, God's dealings with Israel are centered around the coming Tribulation. The reason for this is very simple: Israel has been set aside during the present time while God removes from the Gentiles "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). The time when God will deal with Israel once again awaits the completion of His purpose for the present dispensation. This is the reason that the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse begins with Israel in the Tribulation. This section begins at the point where God resumes His national dealings with Israel once again, anticipating the end of their present desolate condition.

In the Christian section of the discourse, unlike the Jewish section, God does deal with a people during the present time — a time preceding the Tribulation. And those with whom God is presently dealing are the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens *following* Israel's rejection of this offer, which *is EXACTLY* what is in view in this section of the Olivet Discourse. Events in this section occur during and at the end of the time that the house of Israel lies desolate.

(There is a strange, widespread interpretation which associates this second section of the discourse with Israel rather than with Christendom,

but such CANNOT possibly be correct. God's present dealings with a segment of mankind in relation to the kingdom of the heavens *prohibit* this view. *God is NOT dealing with Israel today;* and the kingdom of the heavens, which is the matter at hand throughout this section, had previously been taken from Israel.

Thus, such an interpretation *is NOT ONLY strained and unnatural, BUT it is NOT possible.* Such an interpretation *will NOT at all* fit the tenor of Scripture leading into the Olivet Discourse. It is completely out of line with that taught in the previous chapters of Matthew's gospel.)

Then, *in the Gentile section* of this discourse, *ONLY* the Gentiles are in view. God, at that time in the future when these events occur, will have completed His dealings with Israel and the Church..

The Christians and the nation of Israel will be judged first. *THEN,* God will judge the saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation immediately prior to His 1,000-year reign over the earth.

(Note that any type interpretation of the judgment of the Gentiles in the closing part of the Olivet Discourse, in Matt. 25:31-46, which has Christ judging both saved and unsaved individuals at the time of His return *CANNOT* be correct for at least two main reasons:

- 1) This judgment, as all other judgments preceding the Millennium, has to do with *the millennial kingdom* (v. 34), *NOT with eternal verities.*
- 2) Scripture places the judgment of all the unsaved at one point in time — following the Millennium, *NOT before* (Rev. 20:11-15). Their judgment *has NOTHING* to do with Christ's 1,000-year reign over the earth, *ONLY* with the eternal ages which follow.)

Distinctions Between Parts

There are a number of distinguishing differences which mark the three sections of the Olivet Discourse.

Certain things are peculiar to each section. *Parables*, for example, are seen throughout the Christian section; but parables are seen only at the end of the Jewish section; and parables are not seen at all in the Gentile section. Then, *salvation* and *judgment* appear in quite different settings in each section; and *the time interval* during which events occur is entirely different in each section.

1) Parables

Four parables comprise the whole of the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40-25:30), which is in perfect accord with the structure of Matthew's gospel leading into this discourse.

Parables, in Matthew's gospel, first appear in chapter thirteen. It was at this point in His ministry that Christ *departed the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak in parables* (vv. 1-3).

"The house" and "the seaside" in Matt. 13:1 carry deeper, significant meanings (in their symbolic usage in Scripture) than just being used as a mere statement of fact.

"The house" in this passage points to the same "house" which Christ referred to in Matt. 23:38 — *the house of Israel*; and "the sea" in Scripture is peculiarly related to *the Gentiles* (Jonah 1:15; Rev. 13:1).

Within the symbolism used, Jesus (for the first time) departed from those to whom He had come (the Jewish people), went to an entirely separate entity (the Gentiles), and began to speak in parables. Thus, the first mention of parables in Matthew's gospel relates them peculiarly to *the Gentiles, NOT to Israel* (although Christ later in the chapter went back into the house and uttered three additional parables).

The events of chapter thirteen immediately followed the events of chapter twelve, occurring on "the same day" (v. 1). The events of chapter twelve set the stage for and reveal the reason why Christ departed the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak in parables.

It was in chapter twelve that the Scribes and Pharisees committed what is called the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," attributing to Satan the power by which Christ had performed His miraculous works.

And this was a sin of such magnitude that *there would be NO forgiveness*, "neither in this world ['age'], neither in the world to come ['the age to come' (the Messianic Era)]" (vv. 24-32).

It is here, for all practical purposes, that the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel, although the announcement was not made until after Christ had ridden into Jerusalem (presenting Himself as Israel's King) immediately preceding His crucifixion (21:5-11, 15, 18, 19, 33-43).

In like manner, *the condemnation* of the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees and the announced *desolation* of the house of Israel (23:1-39) also do not appear until a later time in Matthew's gospel, although the events depicted in chapter twelve likewise anticipate these things.

In chapter twelve, the Pharisees, seeking ways to destroy Christ, held a council against Him (v. 14). Jesus, knowing this, withdrew to another place and continued performing miraculous signs having to do with *the kingdom* (v. 15; cf. Isa. 35:1, 5, 6). Christ, at this time, healed a man who was both “blind and dumb”; and “all the people were amazed, and said, ‘Is not this the son of David?’” (vv. 22, 23).

The construction of the Greek text (using the particle *meti*) shows both confusion and negative feelings on their part, undoubtedly brought about by the previous actions of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Pharisees at this point (the Scribes were also included [Mark 3:22]) seized the opportunity to cast reproach upon both Christ and His work by attributing the manifested power to Satan. This brought about Christ’s pronouncement of judgment (vv. 31, 32) and His refusal to reveal any additional sign other than that of “the prophet Jonah” (vv. 38-40).

It is *HERE* that the great turning point in the ministry of Christ occurred. That part of “the sign of Jonah” to which Christ referred *pointed to Calvary, NOT to the Kingdom*. Christ then alluded to judgment about to befall the nation (vv. 41-45), anticipating the announcement of *desolation* in Matt. 23:38.

THEN, for the first time, Christ departed *the house* and went down by *the seaside*, as revealed at the beginning of the next chapter (13:1).

It was not long after these events that Christ announced, “...I will build my church” (16:18) — the announcement of the bringing into existence of an entity separate and distinct from Israel, the “one new man” *in Christ*. *The Cross*, foreshadowed by “the sign of Jonah,” then came into full view (16:21; 17:9 [cf. Luke 9:31], 22, 23; 20:17-19; 21:39).

All of this anticipated the kingdom being taken from Israel, the house of Israel being left desolate, the occurrence of the events of Calvary, and the Church being brought into existence.

Parables, within their proper setting in Matthew’s gospel, are peculiarly connected with Christ’s departure from Israel, with the Gentiles in view. And, although the Church is comprised of those taken from both Israel and the Gentile nations, its association within the framework of that centrally in view is with *the Gentiles* rather than with Israel.

In the types, Joseph and Moses both took *Gentile brides* in the far countries; and in verses such as Acts 15:14 and Rom. 11:25, the Gentiles come into full view through God *visiting* “the Gentiles” and

God bringing about *the fullness* “of the Gentiles.”

Thus, it is only natural that the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is comprised entirely of parables, with parables being a distinguishing characteristic of this section.

2) *Salvation and Judgment*

Salvation in the Jewish section has to do with physical deliverance, and the judgment associated with this deliverance is the Tribulation here upon earth.

Salvation in the Christian section has to do with the soul/life, and the judgment associated with this deliverance is the judgment seat of Christ in the heavens.

Salvation in the Gentile section has to do with entrance into the kingdom, and the judgment associated with Gentiles being allowed to enter the kingdom surrounds the Son of Man seated on “the throne of his glory” here upon the earth.

a) *Jewish Section*

This section begins with Israel in the Tribulation (vv. 4-26); and it ends with the return of Israel’s Messiah at the close of the Tribulation (vv. 27-30), followed by the regathering of the Jewish people from a worldwide dispersion (v. 31), with the parable of the fig tree (vv. 32-36) and a reference to the days of Noah concluding this section (vv. 37-39).

Those who endure “unto the end [the end of the Tribulation]” will be “saved [physically delivered out of this time of trouble]” (v. 13). They will comprise the ones regathered back to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the close of the Tribulation.

ALL is Jewish throughout.

(The judgment of individual Israelites occurs after the Tribulation, *following* the Jewish people being regathered but *preceding* their being placed back in the land. This individual judgment *is NOT* in view in Matt. 24:4-31 [*cf.* Ezek. 20:33-38].)

b) *Christian Section*

This section, comprised of four parables, concerns itself with faithfulness during the present dispensation with a view to participation in regal activity during the coming dispensation. And the emphasis

throughout this section is somewhat evenly distributed between present and future times. Perhaps nowhere else in a comparable length of Scripture can the purpose for one's salvation during the present dispensation be more clearly seen than in this section of Scripture.

The Church will be removed from the earth at the end of the present dispensation, preceding the Tribulation, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and each Christian, in that day, will render an account concerning "the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10b).

Responsibility (present), *accountability* (future), and *the kingdom* (future) form the main thrust of the subject matter throughout the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.

Further, "the kingdom of the heavens" is the subject matter at hand (25:1), something which can no longer pertain to Israel at this point in Matthew's gospel (*cf.* Matt. 21:33-43).

ALL is Christian throughout.

c) Gentile Section

This section begins with the Son of Man, following His return, seated on the "throne of his glory" upon the earth.

All of the saved Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will be gathered before Christ and separated into two groups — *the sheep* (seen as the faithful) and *the goats* (seen as the unfaithful).

They will then be judged (the faithful will be dealt with first, then the unfaithful; and judgment in both instances will be on the basis of their treatment of Christ's "brethren [the Jewish people]" during the Tribulation. Entrance into the kingdom will await the faithful, and the opposite in relation to the kingdom will await the unfaithful.

ALL is Gentile throughout.

3) The Time Interval

The time during which events occur is completely different in each section. In *the Jewish section*, time during and immediately following the Tribulation is in view; in *the Christian section*, time preceding the Tribulation and time leading into the Millennium are in view; and in *the Gentile section*, time following the completion of God's dealings with Israel at the end of the Tribulation is in view.

a) Jewish Section

God's resumption of His dealings with Israel awaits the completion of His present dealings with the Church. Israel has been set aside, and God will not deal with Israel on a national basis again *UNTIL* He has completed His purpose for the present dispensation. *THEN, and ONLY THEN, will God turn to Israel once again.*

The time during which God will resume and complete His dealings with Israel during Man's 6,000-year Day is seen in Daniel's prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks" (Dan. 9:24-27). One Week (one Seven) — the last seven years of the prophecy — awaits fulfillment. This period, which begins with the ratifying of the covenant between the man of sin and Israel (Dan. 9:27), comprises that future time during which God will deal with Israel once again; and this period is the coming seven-year Tribulation.

God will then complete His dealings with Israel, preceding the Messianic Era, immediately following the Tribulation at the time of His return. Israel's blindness will be lifted, the house of Israel will no longer lie desolate, and the nation will then subsequently realize the purpose for its very existence — exercising the *rights belonging to the firstborn* in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

b) Christian Section

This section begins at a time before the Tribulation and actually encompasses the entire present dispensation, with the Millennium in view. The Tribulation *is NOT* in view at all; and this *MUST*, of necessity, be the case because Christians *have NOTHING to do with this time.*

The Tribulation is the "time of Jacob's trouble," not the Christians'. The matter of a pretribulation rapture of Christians is dealt with indirectly in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse through a depiction of Christians appearing before the Lord in judgment apart from any mention of the Tribulation.

Related Scripture, of course, reveals why this is the case. The Tribulation lies beyond the rapture and has to do with events here *upon the earth* after Christians have been removed; and judgment awaiting Christians, following their removal from the earth, will occur *in the heavens.*

A pretribulation resurrection and rapture of Christians is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture (I Thess. 5:1-11; Heb. 11:4-7; Rev. 1:10-15; 4:1, 2), and Matt. 24:40-25:30 *MUST* be understood in this same light.

The subject matter at hand in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse is *faithfulness* or *unfaithfulness* of the Lord's servants during His time of absence, with *a future reckoning* and *the coming kingdom* in view. The time during which the Lord's servants exhibit either faithfulness or unfaithfulness covers the entire present dispensation. And the time of reckoning will then occur at the conclusion of the dispensation and will evidently precede the beginning of the Tribulation upon earth.

The ratifying of the covenant between the man of sin and Israel is the event which marks the beginning of the Tribulation rather than the removal of the Church. Revelation chapters four and five have to do with events which will occur during this interval of time, existing between the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation (events at the beginning of chapter four point to the removal of the Church [vv. 1, 2], but the Tribulation does not begin until events depicted at the beginning of chapter six [vv. 1, 2]; and events in chapters four and five *MUST occur BEFORE events in chapter six can occur*.)

Events following the removal of the Church (which anticipate events surrounding the judgment seat [Rev. 1a, 4a; cf. chs. 1b-3]), events surrounding the twenty-four elders relinquishing their crowns (ch. 4b), and events surrounding the seven-sealed scroll (ch. 5) *MUST be brought to pass FIRST*.

(That is, through comparing Scripture with Scripture, it appears evident that God will complete His dealings with Christians before He turns to and completes His dealings with Israel. This would necessitate *events at the judgment seat of Christ in heaven [Rev. 1b-3] being completed BEFORE events of the Tribulation begin upon earth* [Rev. 6:1ff].)

Then, events surrounding the twenty-four elders [which have to do directly with Christians, following judgment] and the seven-sealed scroll [which has to do with both Christians and Israel] *MUST be brought to pass preceding the Tribulation as well*.

For more information on the preceding, refer to Chapters VI-IX of the author's book, *The Time of the End*.)

c) *Gentile Section*

Following the rapture, one-fourth of the earth's population *will die* during or immediately following the Tribulation (Rev. 6:8). As well, two-thirds of the world's Jewish population is singled out in this same

respect (Ezek. 5:12; Zech. 13:8, 9). Then, there are verses showing unrevealed numbers being slain (Rev. 8:9, 11; 9:15-18; 11:5, 13; 12:16; 13:15), numbers which would include those slain at the Battle of Armageddon, following the Tribulation, where blood will run “even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [about 180 miles]” (Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:17-21; cf. Isa. 63:1-6).

The judgment of the Gentiles, as revealed in Matthew chapter twenty-five, will seemingly occur immediately following all these things (I Peter 4:17). This judgment has to do with *living Gentiles ALONE*. No resurrection is in view. These will be saved Gentiles who will have survived the judgments of the Tribulation when Israel’s Messiah returns.

Gentiles who die during the Tribulation will be resurrected and appear in one of two entirely separate judgments, separated by 1,000 years, depending on their saved or unsaved status.

The saved will evidently be resurrected and judged before the Millennium in a separate judgment from that of the saved Gentiles surviving the Tribulation in Matt. 25:34-40. Their resurrection and judgment is revealed in Rev. 20:4.

The unsaved though will *NOT* be resurrected and judged *UNTIL* the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15).

Concluding Remarks:

The kingdom is the focal point toward which the entire program of God, as it pertains to man, has been moving since the creation of Adam; and the Olivet Discourse comprises a dissertation of God’s terminal dealings with the three divisions of mankind — Jew, Christian, and Gentile — *immediately preceding and leading into this kingdom*.

The Jewish section has to do with Israel in the Tribulation, followed by the return of Israel’s Messiah and the regathering of Israel, *anticipating the kingdom*.

The Christian section has to do with the present faithfulness or unfaithfulness of Christians and the coming judgment seat, *anticipating the kingdom*.

The Gentile section has to do with all the saved, living Gentiles being dealt with immediately following God’s completion of His dealings with Israel, *anticipating the kingdom*.

Jewish Section

Chapters 1-9

1

THE TIME, SIGN

HAVING TO DO SOLELY WITH ISRAEL, YET FUTURE

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the building of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [‘age’]?” (Matt. 24:1-3).

The Jewish section of the Olivet discourse (24:4-39) has been interpreted several different ways over the years. The three main schools of interpretation look upon the prophecy as:

- 1) *Having been fulfilled in the past.*
- 2) *Being fulfilled partly during the course of the present dispensation but mainly during and immediately following the Tribulation.*
- 3) *Being fulfilled in its entirety during and immediately following the Tribulation.*

Bible students viewing the prophecy as having been fulfilled in *the past* invariably refer to events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as completing the fulfillment.

A great deal of non-literal interpretation (spiritualizing) marks this view; and it should come as no surprise that the proponents of this or similar views are mainly from the amillennial school of interpretation, although some from the premillennial school can be found within this group as well.

Those viewing the prophecy as being fulfilled *partly during the course of the present dispensation but mainly during and immediately following the Tribulation*, on the basis of Luke 21:20-24, invariably see events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as being included; but the main emphasis, in their thinking, lies beyond this time. The main emphasis is upon events near the end of the age, which appear to set the stage for the Tribulation, and then to events during and immediately following the Tribulation.

Then, those viewing the prophecy as *completely future* see a reference by Christ *ONLY* to events during and immediately following the Tribulation.

Both of the latter two views, in one sense of the word, are somewhat similar in nature. Both view a reference to certain events during the Tribulation and during the time immediately following; and individuals adhering to the premillennial school of interpretation normally hold to one or the other.

Through a casual observation, one might be led to believe that there is really no appreciable difference in the latter two interpretative views usually held by premillennial students of the Word.

But this is NOT the case at all.

Part or all of verses four through fourteen are the verses in question as to the time of fulfillment, and the period into which the fulfillment of these verses is placed (either before or during the Tribulation) will affect interpretation *NOT ONLY* at this point in Scripture *BUT* at certain other points as well. And because of hermeneutical interpretative principles involved, the manner in which this section of Scripture is understood will either open or close the door to a correct understanding of a number of key passages of Scripture.

Thus, one's view of the time element involved in this section of Scripture *is NOT* something which should be taken lightly. And, as will be shown in this chapter and several subsequent chapters, the latter of the two views held by various premillennial interpreters, not the former, is the correct way to look upon verses four through fourteen.

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse actually has to do, *in its entirety, with events beyond the present dispensation, with events beyond the time in which God deals with the Church.* *NO* single event

in any part of this section of the Olivet Discourse has been fulfilled in the past; *NOR* is any event in any part of this section presently being fulfilled. Certain things *similar* to a number of events in this section of Scripture have transpired in the past and continue to transpire today (*cf.* vv. 4-7, 11, 12), *BUT NOT* these specific events.

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

It *MUST* be understood that events can begin to occur in the Jewish Section of the Olivet Discourse *ONLY* during that future time when God *ONCE AGAIN* resumes His national dealings with Israel.

Such dealings on the part of God await the coming Tribulation, and these dealings *NOT ONLY* cover all of this period *BUT* also move beyond Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, as God continues to deal with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27).

Attempting to see some of these events being fulfilled during the present time (the closing years of the present dispensation) — even though near the end of the age, immediately preceding the Tribulation — is *out of line* with the fact that God is *NOT* presently dealing with Israel as a nation.

In short, *this is a mistake of MAJOR proportions in hermeneutical interpretation* (that part of hermeneutics which would present a *clear distinction* between God's dealings with the Church and Israel within two separate dispensations).

Israel has been set aside, awaiting the calling out of a bride for God's Son (*cf.* Gen. 23-25). God *MUST* complete His purpose for the present dispensation *BEFORE* resuming His dealings with Israel. And the fulfillment of all parts of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse *MUST* await that time.

The Olivet Discourse was delivered by the Lord to His disciples immediately preceding the completion of the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy. And events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse *MUST* occur within and following the period of four hundred ninety years "determined" upon *the Jewish people* and *the city of Jerusalem* to, in effect, bring about a *consummation of ALL things* which *MUST* be brought to pass during *Man's Day*, preceding the *Messianic Era* (Dan. 9:24).

From the beginning of Daniel's prophecy — “from the going forth of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem” (given by Artaxerxes [about 445 B.C.; cf. Neh. 2:1ff]) — *there was NO break in the “determined” time UNTIL “Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25).*

The chronometer ran uninterrupted until the climactic events surrounding Israel's rejection of her Messiah and the proffered kingdom of the heavens, leading into Calvary; and it was here, for the first time, that the chronometer marking off the full four hundred ninety years stopped. It stopped with Christ's crucifixion, at the end of the four hundred eighty-third year.

ONLY seven years remained to be fulfilled, and these seven years STILL await fulfillment today.

Insofar as Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is concerned, the beginning of the Messianic Era is no nearer today than it was when the chronometer stopped almost two thousand years ago.

Seven years remained THEN, and seven years STILL remain today.

During the interval, Israel has been set aside while God calls out a separate and distinct people — the “one new man” *in Christ* — to be the recipient of that which was offered to and rejected by Israel (the kingdom of the heavens).

And events during this time (present time) are dealt with in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse (24:40-25:30), *NOT in the Jewish section (24:4-39).*

Events in the Jewish section can begin to occur *ONLY when the chronometer marking off time in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks begins once again, fulfilling the last seven years of the prophecy.*

This period will begin, as foretold in Daniel's prophecy itself, when the man of sin makes his seven-year covenant with Israel (v. 27); and the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse will, beginning at this point, be rapidly fulfilled during an unbroken twenty-five hundred and ninety-five-day period (the seven-year Tribulation, twenty-five hundred twenty days [Daniel's Seventieth Week], plus seventy-five subsequent days [cf. Dan. 12:11-13]).

THEN, the Messianic Era will be ushered in.

(For additional information on Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, refer to Chapter XII in the author's book, *The Time of the End.*)

When Shall These Things Be?

Christ referred to His coming at the end of chapter twenty-three *ONLY* in connection with Israel's "desolation." But the larger scope of the disciples' question takes into account both *the desolation of the house of Israel* (23:38) and Christ's subsequent statement concerning *the destruction of the Temple* (24:1, 2). This is evident from their additional question which concerned *the sign of His coming and the end of the age*.

Nothing is said in chapter twenty-three or in the opening two verses of chapter twenty-four (dealing with the Temple) about Christ's coming in connection with the destruction of the Temple. But, within the scope of both questions in the next verse, in verse three, *the entire matter would have to be in view*. The disciples' questions would have to be looked upon as referring to *the Lord's coming in relation to both Israel's desolation and the destruction of the Temple*.

"When shall these things be" *can ONLY* refer to both *the time of the desolation and the time of the Temple's destruction*.

Since this is the case, some Bible students have questioned how Christ's response could refer *ONLY* to events during and following the Tribulation? After all, the house of Israel is *presently* in a desolate state and has been for almost two millenniums. It was left in this condition by Christ at His first coming; and the Temple itself (along with the city of Jerusalem) was destroyed in 70 A.D.

Note first of all the announced "desolation" in Matt. 23:38. It is true that the house of Israel — which includes the people, the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land — *has been* in this condition for almost two millenniums.

But it is also true that there is a more specific, announced "desolation" of the house of Israel which is *future* — *a desolation in connection with the prophecy, a desolation lying within the scope of time covered by Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy*. In this respect this "desolation" is associated *specifically with the Tribulation, during that future time when God resumes His national dealings with Israel*.

In Luke's account of the Olivet Discourse (21:5ff), reference is made to a desolation in connection with a future destruction of Jerusalem, and Luke places this desolation *in the Tribulation* (vv.

20-24; cf. Isa. 27:10; note “the abomination of desolation” in Matt. 24:15 [cf. Dan. 9:27; 11:31]).

Luke 21:20-24 though, dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem, is usually looked upon by Bible students as referring to events occurring in 70 A.D. However, such an understanding of this passage *CANNOT* be correct for several reasons:

1) Certain things stated in this passage *CANNOT* be viewed as having occurred in 70 A.D. or in the years following. Reference is made to “the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (v. 22), and to Jerusalem, following its destruction, being “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (v. 24).

Neither of these can be associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. “All things...written” *were NOT* brought to pass at this time. Most of the great prophecies surrounding the Jewish people still await fulfillment today. And Jerusalem is *NOT* presently being trodden down of the Gentiles, even though the “times of the Gentiles” is still running its course.

Jerusalem is under Jewish control today; and although the Temple area within the city presently remains in possession of the Gentiles, the prophecy in Luke 21:24 *CANNOT* somehow relate to just this area *per se*, for the Temple area will come under Jewish control during the first part of the Tribulation, before the Times of the Gentiles ends.

This section in Luke’s gospel can refer *ONLY to a future destruction of Jerusalem* which will be associated with “the days of vengeance,” the fulfilling of “all things which are written,” and Jerusalem being “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (cf. Rev. 11:1, 2).

2) Comparing Matthew’s and Luke’s Olivet Discourse accounts, events in Matt. 24:15-22 *MUST* be looked upon as occurring *at the SAME time* as events in Luke 21:20-24.

(Note the sequence of events in parallel Scriptures in Matthew’s and Luke’s Olivet Discourse accounts [Matt. 24:3-14 and Luke 21:7-19; Matt. 24:15-22 and Luke 21:20-24; Matt. 24:23-31 and Luke 21:25-28; Matt. 24:32ff and Luke 21:29ff].)

The section in Matthew has to do with the man of sin entering into “the holy place,” the Jewish people told to “flee into the mountains,” and “great tribulation” throughout the land.

The section in Luke has to do with “Jerusalem compassed with armies,” the Jews told to “flee to the mountains,” “the days of vengeance,” “great distress in the land,” and Jerusalem being “trodden down of the Gentiles.”

In other words, both writers describe certain events surrounding the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem (either *the Temple* or *the entire city*) which occur *at the SAME time*. Matthew describes one facet of the matter and Luke another.

Matthew’s description begins by viewing *the Temple*, and Luke’s description begins by viewing *the entire city*. Both accounts refer to events occurring at that future time when the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel and, in all his fury, turns upon the Jewish people.

Both accounts, thus, refer to events which begin in the middle of the Tribulation and cover *NOT ONLY* the last half of the Tribulation *BUT* also days immediately following.

Specific reference to Jerusalem being trodden down of the Gentiles during this time is given in Rev. 11:2:

“...and the holy city [Jerusalem] shall they tread under foot forty and two months [three and one-half years, the last half of the Tribulation, beginning with the parallel events in Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff].”

At the end of this period, Messiah will return, the Times of the Gentiles will end, and Jerusalem, through Divine intervention, will cease to be trodden under foot.

The reference to the “destruction” of the Temple in Matt. 24:1, 2 is in connection with the announced “desolation” in Matt. 23:38.

There is a *past desolation* of the house of Israel (extending into the present), and there is a *past destruction* of the Temple (70 A.D.); but the reference in the passage *can ONLY be* to a *future desolation* of the house of Israel in connection with a *future destruction* of the Temple (a destruction also in connec-

tion with a future destruction of Jerusalem). And the text in Luke 21:20 places the occurrence of this future “desolation” and “destruction” *DURING the Tribulation*.

Thus, Jesus, answering the disciples’ question concerning the time when these things would occur, refers them to events yet future, even today — *events which will occur DURING the coming Tribulation*.

A future destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, foretold in Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff, is synonymous with the destruction in view in Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (note: “...shall destroy *the city and the sanctuary*” [v. 26]).

The words closing verse twenty-six, “and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (KJV), should literally read, “and unto the end, wars and desolations are determined.”

“The end” is *the end of the full Seventy Weeks*, which corresponds to *the end of the Tribulation*; and the “desolations” have to do with *the house of Israel being left desolate at THIS time, NOT during the present day and time* (cf. Jer. 33:10; Ezek. 36:33-35; Dan. 8:13; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15).

Verse twenty-seven then goes on to refer to the entire seven-year Tribulation period, with specific emphasis upon the same thing as in verse twenty-six — the “abomination of desolation” performing his work, beginning in the middle of the Tribulation.

Once again the word “desolate” is used in this verse:

“...he shall make it *desolate* [referring to a future, further desolation of that which Christ had left desolate — both occurring within the scope of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy], even unto the consummation [the end of the Tribulation].”

Verse twenty-seven is a commentary on verse twenty-six, and vice versa. Also, these verses together constitute a commentary on the Olivet Discourse passages, and vice versa.

(Note that events revealed in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy occur *DURING time covered by the prophecy, NOT outside of this time* [as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.])

What Shall Be the Sign...?

The Lord responded in a very clear manner to the disciples' question concerning the "time" of the desolation of the house of Israel and the destruction of the Temple. The "abomination of *desolation*" (or, as in Daniel's prophecy, "the abomination that maketh *desolate*") would desecrate the Temple; and his armies would then destroy, *NOT ONLY* the Temple, *BUT* the entire city of Jerusalem.

The revealed "time" would thus be in the middle of the Tribulation, in the middle of Daniel's Seventieth Week. And staying completely within the framework of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, discounting the time that the chronometer marking off this period does not run (the entire present dispensation), the fulfillment of events to which Jesus referred would begin to occur three and one-half years after they were revealed.

Of equal clearness was the Lord's response to the disciples' second question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ['age']?" Christ led into the first question in verses four through fourteen, and He answered the question in a very specific manner in verses fifteen through twenty-two. He then led into the second question in a very similar manner beginning with verse twenty-three (*cf.* vv. 4-6; 23-26), and the question is specifically answered in verses twenty-seven through thirty-one.

Note verse thirty: "And *then* shall appear the *sign*..." In this respect, the entire Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse constitutes a response to the disciples' two questions. In each instance, Christ *first* presented material relevant to an understanding of the specific answers, and He *then* gave the specific answers.

The disciples' second question is often thought of in the form of two questions: "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" and "What shall be the sign of the end of the age?" Further, these are sometimes thought of in a disassociated sense. However, such *CANNOT* be the case in either instance. This is *ONE* question with *ONE* sign.

The question does have two parts, but these parts *CANNOT* be disassociated one from the other. The manner in which the question is worded *will NOT* allow the two parts to be understood in independent senses, and the Lord's answer to the question occurs

within this same framework as well. “Thy coming” and “the end of the age” are marked by *one sign*, and the Lord’s coming can only be regarded as occurring *in association with the end of the age*.

The *sign* of the Lord’s coming and the end of the age occurs *after the Tribulation, at the end of the time of desolation*.

Note the exact wording of verses twenty-nine and thirty:

“Immediately *after* the Tribulation of those days...*then* shall appear the sign...” This sign has to do with the “sun” and “moon” being darkened, the “stars” falling from heaven, and the “powers of the heavens” being shaken. Luke broadens this by referring to *signs* both in the heavens and upon the earth:

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26; *cf.* Joel 3:15, 16).

A reference to these events found in Heb. 12:26 reveals that God is going to shake both the heavens and the earth, bringing these events (these *signs*) to pass:

“Yet once more I shake not the earth only [as in the past at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:18)], but also heaven.”

(The shaking of the mount at Sinai during Moses’ day would foreshadow the unshakable kingdom of Christ shaking and destroying *ALL world kingdoms during Christ’s day* — seen occurring in Daniel at the time that the Stone strikes the image in its final form, at its feet [*cf.* Dan. 2:44, 45]; and the shaking of the heavens would refer to the shaking of powers in these kingdoms.

This shaking will cause the sun and moon to be darkened and the stars to be dislodged from their present courses [again, a reference to Gentile world powers]. And this shaking is seen in Scripture to result in utter governmental chaos upon the earth in that coming day.

All of the preceding is vividly described in the Book of Revelation through the breaking of the sixth seal [6:12-17], the sounding

of the seventh trumpet [10:1-7; 11:15-19], and the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial [16:17-21].

This is further described in Luke 21:25 through a reference to “the sea [pointing to the nations] and the waves roaring,” describing the previously mentioned “distress of nations with perplexity.”

For additional information on this subject, refer to Chs. XV, XVIII, XIX in the author’s book, *The Time of the End.*)

Thus, the answer to the disciples’ question concerning the sign of the Lord’s coming and the end of the age centers around that future time when God will shake the heavens and the earth (referring to God bringing about an end to Gentile world power), immediately preceding and following the completion of Daniel’s full Seventy Weeks.

THEN shall appear “the sign of the Son of man in heaven”; *THEN* shall “all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” And it will be *THEN, NOT BEFORE*, that Israel will say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:39).

(Note a parallel derived from teachings surrounding Heb. 12:26:

The past shaking of the earth occurred immediately before God made a covenant with Israel [the Mosaic covenant, old covenant], anticipating the nation’s establishment within a theocracy.

The future shaking of the earth and heaven will occur immediately before God makes another covenant with Israel [the new covenant], anticipating the nation’s reestablishment in the land within a restored theocracy [cf. Heb. 8:6-13].

In both instances, the shaking of Gentile world power would be in view, for in both instances Gentile world power was to be /will be destroyed, with a view to Israel then holding the sceptre within a theocracy.)

Christ or Antichrist

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43).

There is an axiom in Biblical study to the effect that if the *truth* is rejected over a long enough period of time, God will cause the

individual or individuals rejecting the truth to believe that which is *untrue* (cf. II Thess. 2:9-12).

For Israel, this time arrived when the Scribes and Pharisees filled up “*the measure*” of their fathers (Matt. 23:31-32). They were the children of those who had exhibited unbelief in Israel down through the years, and they held the dubious honor of being the ones who brought the entire matter to the point where the Lord could allow it to go no further. Israel, over a prolonged period, had rejected the truth; and the Scribes and Pharisees had caused the nation to bring the entire matter to a climax by rejecting the One Who is *very Truth Himself*, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the nation at this point was left to believe that which was *untrue*. *The nation was left desolate*, awaiting an individual who would be received by the Jewish people and subsequently bring about *a further desolation, a desolation having NO parallel in history*.

Israel had rejected *the true Christ*, and the nation was left to believe *the false Christ*. Israel had rejected *the Truth*, wherein deliverance could have been effected; and the nation was then left to receive *the Lie* (cf. John 8:44), wherein complete and total destruction, apart from Divine intervention, would await the nation (cf. Matt. 24:22). Israel *can ONLY* be looked upon as fitting within the scope of the principle revealed in II Thessalonians chapter two; and the outworking of this principle within Israel’s national affairs *MUST* come to pass, which God will use to bring the nation to the place of repentance. *THIS is the reason* for the impending “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

This time of trouble (during which Israel will believe *the Lie*) will befall the Gentile nations as well (Luke 21:35), and the reason for this is very simple. Israel was the nation called into existence to be the channel through which the Gentile nations would be both reached and blessed. Israel was to be placed in her own land at the head of the nations as a kingdom of priests within a theocracy, and all the Gentile nations were to be reached by Israel with God’s message and be blessed through Israel. The Gentile nations, in this fashion, were to enter into that which Israel had entered.

However, Israel, like Jonah, went in the wrong direction; and the impending “time of Jacob’s trouble” awaiting Israel will be

the ultimate result. And the Gentile nations *MUST* also enter this time of trouble as well because of the existing relationship which God established between Israel and the nations.

This relationship demands that the nations enter into that which Israel enters. It was supposed to be *salvation and blessings*, and it one day will be so; *BUT a time of unparalleled trouble* awaits Israel first, and, resultingly, the nations as well. Israel and the nations *together MUST enter and pass through the coming Tribulation*.

(A note of interest within this line of thought is the fact that the relationship existing between Israel and the Church is *NOT at all* the same as the relationship existing between Israel and the nations.

The Church is an entirely separate, a distinct entity, an entirely separate “nation” [I Peter 2:9, 10]; and, unlike the Gentile nations, the Church, in this respect, *does NOT enter into that which Israel enters*. Again, hermeneutics would be involved in seeing a clear distinction between Israel, the Church, and the nations [*cf.* I Cor. 10:32; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:11-15].

Resultingly, the reason for the coming Tribulation *has NOTHING to do with the Church*; and the clear teaching of Scripture attests to the fact that the Church will be removed from the earth *BEFORE* the Tribulation begins [Rev. 1:10ff; 4:1, 2; 6:1ff].)

Satan’s climactic efforts to destroy Israel, preceding the overthrow and destruction of his kingdom, will revolve around the Antichrist. Satan will give to this false Christ that which he previously offered to the true Christ — “the kingdoms of the world [looked upon as *one world kingdom* in Rev. 11:15]” (Matt. 4:8, 9). Satan will give to this man “his power, and his seat [‘throne’], and great authority” (Rev. 13:2); and he will begin exercising this authority in all its fullness “in the midst of the week” (Dan. 9:27), in the middle of the Tribulation.

In this position, the one whom Israel will receive at the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, will, after three and one-half years, reveal his true colors and turn against Israel in all his fury. About *nine million Jews* will die, and about *one and one-half billion Gentiles* will suffer the same fate — all through *climactic efforts by Satan to destroy the ONE nation called into existence to be the channel through which ALL the nations of the earth would be reached and blessed*.

A remnant from Israel though will survive the Great Tribulation and the judgments occurring immediately following Christ's return (Ezek. 5:12; Zech. 13:8, 9), and so will most of the Gentiles (*cf.* Rev. 9:15-18; 13:15; 14:14-20). Israel *MUST* occupy the position for which the nation was called into existence; and Gentile nations *MUST* be present for Israel to occupy this position. "...the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29).

God *will NOT* change His mind concerning the reason He formed the nations and then called Israel into existence. Israel though (and resultingly the nations) *MUST* first have her part in the outworking of the principle set forth in II Thessalonians chapter two. *THEN*, Israel will realize her calling in relation to the nations of the earth.

Concluding Remarks:

The disciples' questions in Matt. 24:3 are *Jewish* in their entirety, and these questions are answered in *the Jewish section* of the Olivet Discourse. These questions relate to *the desolation of the house of Israel and the destruction of the Temple (expanded to the city of Jerusalem in Luke's account)*; and the Lord honored the questions by answering them within this same framework.

The entire matter was projected out into the coming Tribulation, a period through which Israel *MUST* pass because of the climactic events outlined in chapter twenty-three.

At the point of these climactic events, keeping within the axiom set forth in II Thessalonians chapter two, *Israel's destiny was SET*; and the Lord responded to the disciples' questions accordingly.

Of striking difference in the Jewish and Christian sections of the Olivet Discourse is *the presence of the period of Tribulation in the former and the absence of this period in the latter*. Events in the Jewish section occur, in their entirety, *WITHIN and immediately following the Tribulation*; and events in the Christian section occur, in their entirety, *WITHOUT the Tribulation and that subsequently occurring*.

There is a *TOTAL association with the Tribulation and subsequent events* on the one hand and a *TOTAL disassociation with the Tribulation and subsequent events* on the other hand.

This is as it MUST be. The revealed purpose for and hermeneutical principals surrounding the whole of the matter necessitate such.

2

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS *The Beginning of Israel's Birth Pangs*

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:4-8).

False Christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are ever in the news today.

But the reference in Matthew chapter twenty-four is *specifically* to events in days ahead, events during the Tribulation, with events today setting the stage for events which are about to occur, as revealed in the opening verses of the Olivet Discourse.

The end of the age is the matter at hand throughout these opening verses, in keeping with the disciples’ questions (v. 3); but the *sign* of the end of the age is not given until near the conclusion of the Jewish section of the discourse (vv. 29, 30).

“The end” in verse six is the same “end” referred to in verses thirteen and fourteen — *the end of the age*, or *the end of the Tribulation*. This is synonymous with “the end,” “the consummation,” in Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:26, 27).

Although verses four through eight describe events which will actually exist throughout the Tribulation, the specific reference is to events during *the first part of this period*.

Note verse six: "...but the end is not yet." The specific events described here *will occur at a time during the Tribulation which precedes the actual time of the end*.

Verses nine through fourteen then continue from this point and provide information *concerning additional events throughout the remainder of the Tribulation, with previously revealed events continuing*.

Note the concluding statement in this section: "...then shall the end come." Here we have *events which occur during the latter part of the Tribulation and lead up to the end of this period, the end of the age*.

Thus, verses four through eight depict *events which will occur during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation*; and verses nine through fourteen depict *additional events which will occur during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation*.

The expression "the beginning of sorrows" (v. 8), as will be shown, is peculiarly related to *Israel* during the Tribulation, pointing to climactic events which will occur both *in the middle* and *at the end* of this seven-year period. Verses four through eight carry one to *the time of the first of these two climactic events* (in the middle of the Tribulation), and verses nine through fourteen pick up at this point and carry one through to *the time of the second of these two climactic events* (at the end of the Tribulation).

Verses four through fourteen, thus, cover *major related events pertaining to Israel from the beginning to the end of the Tribulation*.

The ENTIRE scope of the matter is revealed in these verses, BUT with very little detail.

THEN, verses fifteen through twenty-six drop back and cover the same time period as verses nine through fourteen, providing additional details concerning *a number of events which will occur in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*.

(The reference to "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes" in v. 7b is in connection with *wars between nations* (vv. 6, 7a).

Wars of this nature result in "famines" and "pestilences" in various places, *but NOT in "earthquakes."*

The word “earthquakes” is a translation of a plural form of the Greek word *seismos*, which simply refers to a shaking, NOT to an earthquake *per se* [the English word “seismic,” meaning shaking, tremors, agitation, is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *seismos*]. The words “seismic” or *seismos* would refer to the shaking produced by an earthquake [or anything else that is being shaken], though not to the earthquake itself.

And, when *seismos* is used in Scripture, as in Matt. 24:7, that being referenced as being shaken *MUST* be derived from the context or through comparing Scripture with Scripture elsewhere.

And, through both the context and comparing Scripture with Scripture [e.g., Rev. 7:12-17, where the word *seismos* also appears], this shaking in Matt. 24:7 has to do, NOT with the earth, BUT with world kingdoms on the earth. It has to do with God, through His providential control of all things, bringing about chaos within Gentile world powers, particularly toward the end of the Tribulation [toward the end of Man’s Day, toward the end of the Times of the Gentiles].

For more information on God one day shaking Gentile world powers in this manner, refer to Chapter XV, “The Great Seismos,” in the author’s book, *The Time of the End.*)

The End Is Not Yet

Attention in the Olivet Discourse centers itself particularly on events beginning in the middle of the Tribulation and carrying through to the end. Very little attention is given in this discourse to events which will occur during the first half of the Tribulation.

And even in the five verses which do deal with this time (vv. 4-8), the main focus is still on climactic events which will occur in the middle, during the last half, and at the end of the Tribulation.

The word “sorrows” (v. 8) is the key word depicting this. “Sorrows” is a translation of the Greek word *odin*, and it is really not a good translation as we understand words today.

Odin has to do with “the travail” which a woman undergoes as she endures a time of labor immediately preceding the birth of a child; and the word “sorrows” carries too broad of a meaning in this respect. *Odin* could be better translated “birth-pangs” or “travail.”

The reference is to Israel in this condition during and at the end of the Tribulation (beginning in the first half).

And related Scripture clearly reveals that the terminus of the matter will occur at two points — one *in the middle* and the other *at the end* of the Tribulation. *Israel will give birth in the middle, and Israel will experience birth at the end.*

Isaiah 66:7, 8 refers to future times when Israel will both give birth and experience birth:

“Before she [Israel] travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.

Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”

Israel will first deliver “a man-child”; then, the nation itself will be “born at once.” But, though these verses in Isaiah refer to Israel bringing forth a man-child, the “travail” and “pain” associated with birth are connected *ONLY with the birth of the nation, NOT with the birth of the man-child.*

Revelation 12:1-5 then presents the other part of the matter pertaining to Israel’s travail. In these verses, the only birth in view is that of the “man-child,” occurring *before* the birth of the nation; and Israel is seen crying out while travailing in pain, awaiting the birth of this child.

Events in these verses do not move beyond this point. The subsequent birth of the nation, as in Isa. 66:8, is not in view at all.

Thus, related Scripture clearly reveals that Israel’s travail in Matt. 24:8 is associated with two events:

- 1) *The nation first giving birth* (Rev. 12:5).
- 2) *The nation then experiencing birth* (Isa. 66:7, 8).

There will *NOT ONLY* be a bringing forth by the one travailing in pain, *BUT* this same one will herself subsequently be brought forth. *The one giving birth will be the same one ultimately born.*

Daniel and Revelation

In the interpretation of particularly the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, the proper place which the Books of Daniel and

Revelation hold in Scripture *MUST* be recognized. These are companion volumes which deal largely with the same time period under discussion — *with events during and following the coming Tribulation*.

It has already been demonstrated to some extent in Chapter I of this book how the Book of Daniel sheds an abundance of light on the opening portion of the Olivet Discourse (note verse fifteen in this respect: "...spoken of by Daniel the prophet...").

The same also holds true for the Book of Revelation, for no other book in Scripture deals so extensively with details surrounding events during the Tribulation than this book does (chs. 6-19a).

The Book of Daniel concerns itself with the kingdom of this world in four different stages, depicted by Nebuchadnezzar's image seen standing in Babylon. Space is given to different periods in history when this kingdom (the kingdom of Babylon) was under the control of different nations: *the Babylonians themselves*, then *the Medes and Persians*, and then *the Grecians* (cf. Dan. 2:31-33, 36-39; 7:1-6; 8:1-8, 20-22).

But most of the space given to the Babylonian kingdom in the Book of Daniel pertains to *that future time when this kingdom will come under the control of worldwide forces headed up by Antichrist during the Tribulation, followed by the utter destruction of the final form of the kingdom of Babylon*, "the kingdom of the world" in Rev. 11:15 (ASV; cf. Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45; 7:7-28; 8:9-14, 23-26; 9:26, 27; 11:21-45).

The Book of Revelation though *does NOT deal with the first three parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image, ONLY with the fourth part*. Beginning with chapter six and continuing through chapter nineteen, the kingdom of Antichrist is depicted from its beginning to its end.

This portion of Scripture opens by showing Antichrist focusing his attention on the throne through *going forth* "conquering, and to conquer" (6:1, 2). And, after three and one-half years, he is seen enthroned in all his power (13:1ff).

THEN, at the end of the full seven years, chapters fifteen and nineteen reveal the utter destruction of his kingdom. "The kingdom of the world" at that time will become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (ASV; cf. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Rev. 11:15).

Thus, it is only natural when studying the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse that continual reference be made to the Books

of Daniel and Revelation. These books deal with the same time period and provide a wealth of related, indispensable information.

The Man-Child

There are only three places in the New Testament where the word “travail” is used relative to Israel. The first two occurrences are in Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of the Olivet Discourse (parallel references), and the third is in Rev. 12:2, 4 (*odin* appears in the Greek text in both Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts, and *odino* [a cognate word, having the same meaning] appears in Rev. 12:2). All three of these references are in accounts having to do with Israel during the coming Tribulation (*cf.* Acts 2:24; Gal. 4:19, 27; I Thess. 5:3).

In Revelation chapter twelve though, unlike the Olivet Discourse accounts, specific reference is made to the birth of a child in connection with this travail. And the information in this complete account is such that when the Olivet Discourse passages are studied in conjunction with this portion of the Book of Revelation, these related Scriptures begin to open up to one’s understanding.

1) *Contextual Interpretation*

There is a common but erroneous interpretation of the travail and childbirth in Rev. 12:1-5 which associates this passage with Israel bringing forth Christ almost two thousand years ago.

This association is made largely on the basis of verse five:

“And she [Israel] brought forth a man-child, who was [‘is about to’] rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

This verse is looked upon as a reference to the birth, ascension, and coming reign of Christ, *with LITTLE attention given to the contextual place which the verse occupies in the Book of Revelation.*

Contextually, this verse CANNOT be understood as a reference to Christ — past or future. The contextual setting within the Book of Revelation is at a time during the Tribulation; and the birth of a son and his removal to God’s throne *will occur during THAT time, NOT during a time two thousand years prior to the events at hand.*

Such is evident from several observations surrounding information given in the verses immediately preceding and following verse five. Looking at the context, Rev. 12:3 refers to Satan and his system of world government at a time near the middle of the Tribulation. All seven heads will have been crowned when events at this point in the book occur, and the seventh head will be none other than the Antichrist himself (*cf.* Rev. 13:1, 2; 17:8-11).

This man will go forth at the beginning of the Tribulation, wearing a crown, “conquering, and to conquer” (6:2); but his being crowned at this time and also at a later time during the Tribulation are two entirely different matters.

The words appearing in the Greek text for “crown” in Rev. 6:2 and in Rev. 12:3; 13:1 are not the same. Two different words are used; and through the use of these words, two types of crowns are in view, depicting marked differences.

The first word is *stephanos* (6:2), referring to a “victor’s crown,” or a crown denoting certain types of “worth” or “valor”; and the second word is *diadema* (12:3; 13:1), referring to a crown denoting “regal authority” or “kingly power.” *There is NO such thing as an incumbent ruler wearing a stephanos; he MUST wear a diadema.*

(For additional information on the use of *stephanos* and *diadema* in the Greek N.T., refer to either the author’s book, *The Time of the End*, Chapter VII, or *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter XII.)

In Rev. 6:2, the Antichrist is seen wearing a *stephanos*, undoubtedly pointing to his victory in conquest, anticipating regal power over the earth.

But *THIS* crown *CANNOT* point to regal power of this nature. In fact, it shows just the opposite. The *stephanos* worn by Antichrist at this time shows that he will *NOT* yet be in possession of worldwide dominion.

But Rev. 12:3; 13:1, 2 show something quite different. In these verses, the Antichrist is seen in possession of a *diadema*, showing that he, at this later time, will have attained the regal power which he had previously sought. And the setting of Rev. 12:3, with Israel in travail (vv. 2, 4), is following the time Antichrist ascends the throne as ruler over the entire earth. *ALL* seven heads of the Beast, in the person of the seventh head, are seen in possession of regal power at this point in the book (shown by the word *diadema*).

Then, Rev. 12:4 refers to that future time when Satan and his angels will be cast out of heaven onto the earth:

“And his [the great red dragon’s (Satan’s)] tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven [his angels (*cf.* Job 38:7; Dan. 8:10)], and did cast them to the earth.”

This casting out will be accomplished by “Michael and his angels” (vv. 7-9) and will occur shortly before the middle of the Tribulation. According to the latter part of verse four, Satan at that time will stand before Israel (who will be in “travail” and “ready to be delivered”) “for to devour her child” *as soon as it is born*.

Verse five then refers to the birth of the man-child and the child’s subsequent removal from the earth into heaven to escape Satan’s wrath. Satan at this point during the Tribulation will no longer have access to the heavens. Consequently, the child, once removed from the earth, will be out of his jurisdiction.

Satan will then turn in all his fury against Israel and seek, in one vain, climactic attempt, to utterly destroy this nation. This is the point in both Daniel’s prophecy and the Olivet Discourse accounts where the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and the Jews in Judaea are told to flee for their lives, with all possible haste, with only the clothes which they will have on their backs at that time.

They are told to flee into “the mountains” (Matt. 24:15, 16 [*world kingdoms, i.e., the nations; cf.* Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 21:20-24]), “the wilderness” (Rev. 12:6, 14-16 [*Gentile lands, as distinguished from the land of Israel; cf.* Ex. 19:1; Heb. 3:8, 17]).

With all this in view, note once again the contextual setting of Rev. 12:5. Verses three and four have to do with events *which will occur during the Tribulation, shortly before the middle*. All seven heads of the Beast will have been crowned at this point, with *diadems, something which CANNOT occur before a time near the middle of the Tribulation*.

Satan and his angels will then be cast out of heaven; and Satan will stand before Israel, who will be *in travail* (“ready to be delivered”), “for to devour her child” *as soon as it is born* (v. 4).

The child will, with Satan in this position, be brought forth and, apparently, be immediately removed from the earth (v. 5). Satan, failing in his attempt to destroy the man-child, will then

turn against the nation which gave birth to the child; and Israel, to escape his wrath, will flee into the surrounding Gentile nations, an event which will occur in the middle of the Tribulation.

Thus, events in verses three and four will occur shortly before the middle of the Tribulation, and events in verse six will occur in the middle itself. By no rational method of Scriptural interpretation can part of the events in verse five be moved back two thousand years in history. The birth of this child *MUST be looked upon as occurring during the coming Tribulation, near the middle, between events described in verses four and six.*

2) Structure of Revelation

The very nature of the way that the Book of Revelation is structured would also demand an interpretation of this nature. The book, through its own revealed format, is divided into three parts.

John was commanded:

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’]” (1:19).

“The things which thou hast seen” are given in chapter one. Chapters two and three have to do with “the things which are” (the present Christian dispensation, along with Christians appearing before the judgment seat [a continuing picture from chapter one])

And chapters four through twenty-two have to do with “the things which shall be hereafter [‘after these things’ (after the things pertaining to the Christian dispensation and the subsequent judgment seat)].”

And *there can be NO mistake* concerning which point in the book this latter division occurs (or, for that matter, the former division also). The same two Greek words, *meta tauta* (translated “hereafter” in Rev. 1:19), are used in Rev. 4:1 (translated “After this” and “hereafter”). The words *meta tauta* should be translated “after these things” in all three instances, calling attention, in each instance, to the third part of the book.

Beyond Rev. 4:2, *ALL events occur after the present dispensation, either immediately preceding, during, or following the Tribulation.*

Chapters four and five depict events which will occur *immedi-*

ately preceding the Tribulation (following the removal of the Church), chapters six through the opening verses of chapter nineteen depict events which will occur *during or immediately following the Tribulation*, and the latter part of nineteen through chapter twenty-two depict events which will occur *following the Tribulation*.

The setting of Revelation chapter twelve is in *the third part of the book* (following the Christian dispensation), with events in the chapter occurring *during the Tribulation*. The context of Rev. 12:5 and the books own built in three-segment division *will NOT allow this verse to refer to the birth of Christ. It can ONLY refer to events during the Tribulation.*

3) Identity of the Man-Child

If Rev. 12:5 is not a reference to Christ, then who? What person will Israel yet bring forth who is destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron”? When all Scriptures bearing on the subject are taken into account, there can really be *ONLY one answer*; and the surprising thing, in the light of all the erroneous interpretation, is the fact that *the man-child is actually identified in Revelation chapter twelve itself.*

Note that language in this chapter is highly figurative: a “woman,” a “great red dragon,” “wings of a great eagle,” “water as a flood,” “the earth opened her mouth.”

The “woman” is not a literal woman, but *Israel*; the “great red dragon” is not a literal dragon, but *Satan*; and, within this same framework, the “man-child [*lit.*, ‘a son, a male’]” should not be looked upon as a literal man (as Christ), but...

The “woman” represents *a nation*. Could not the “man-child” represent a *segment* of that nation, *a first fruit of the nation preceding the birth of the nation itself*, referred to as “the remnant of her seed” in verse seventeen?

Actually, this is *the ONLY interpretation* which will fit the context and remain in line with all Scriptures bearing on the subject. This is also the interpretation which will open up verses four through fourteen of Matthew’s account of the Olivet Discourse, as well as parallel portions of Mark’s and Luke’s accounts.

When Christ was upon earth the first time He called and commissioned twelve disciples who, with Him, carried the gospel of the kingdom to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” over a period

of three and one-half years. To these twelve (Judas later being replaced), Christ promised the chief positions over Israel in the coming kingdom. They would be granted the privilege of sitting on “twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28).

Immediately preceding Christ’s return, during the Tribulation, one hundred forty-four thousand Jews will be called and commissioned to carry the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles throughout the earth (cf. Matt. 24:14).

These individuals will have a three and one-half-year ministry and evidently occupy comparable positions over the Gentiles in the coming kingdom to those which the twelve will occupy over Israel. These are the ones who, during the Tribulation, will “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” in Rev. 12:17 (a verse identifying the “man-child” from verse five).

And, as the twelve will occupy positions in the coming kingdom over those to whom they ministered, the one hundred forty-four thousand will occupy positions in the coming kingdom over those to whom they will minister. They (as Christ and overcoming Christians of the present dispensation) are “about to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (cf. Ps. 2:8, 9; Rev. 2:26, 27).

Recognizing that the “man-child” of Rev. 12:5 is synonymous with “the remnant of her [Israel’s] seed” in verse seventeen — the one hundred forty-four thousand who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles during the Tribulation — will explain why those who have “the testimony of Jesus Christ” are seen *in heaven* and called “a first-fruit [singular in the Greek text, a corporate group] unto God and to the Lamb” in Rev. 14:1-5. They will have previously been removed from the earth to escape Satan’s wrath, and they will comprise “a first fruit” of the nation, anticipating “the main harvest” (the conversion of the entire nation) at the time of Christ’s return.

(Note that “a first fruit” and “the main harvest” are both intimately and inseparably associated with *Israel’s travail*.

“The beginning of sorrows [‘travail’]” will first result in *the birth of the man-child* [“a first fruit” out of the nation]. The travail will then continue throughout the last half of the Tribulation and reach its most intense stage immediately before *the birth of the entire nation* [“the main harvest”] at the conclusion of the Tribulation. *Israel’s travail will THEN be over.*)

4) *Parallels*

There are certain parallels surrounding *the birth and ministry of Christ* and *the birth and ministry of the man-child* which would appear to shed light on events in Rev. 12:5.

Christ, following His birth, was removed from the land of Israel and taken to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. Herod had no jurisdiction in Egypt. Then, at a later time, He was taken back to the land; and, the day came, when He began His public ministry, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for a period of about three and one-half years.

In similar fashion, following his birth, the man-child will be removed from the earth and be taken into heaven to escape Satan's wrath. Satan, at that time, will no longer have jurisdiction in the heavens. Then, at a later point in time, the man-child will be sent back to the earth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles for a period of about three and one-half years.

The length of time Christ spent in Egypt is unrevealed; but it could only have been relatively short, for He grew up beyond this time in the land of Israel. In like manner, the length of time that the man-child will spend in heaven is unrevealed; but it can only be relatively short, for the man-child — the one hundred forty-four thousand — is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles throughout the earth during the last half of the Tribulation.

It is altogether possible and seemingly very probable that the one hundred forty-four thousand will be taught the message they are to proclaim by Christ Himself during the time they spend in heaven.

Christ taught His twelve disciples the message which they proclaimed, and He also removed the Apostle Paul from evidently a place in the Arabian desert and then transported Paul into His presence in heaven in order to teach him the message which he was to proclaim throughout the Gentile world before sending him back to earth to proclaim this message (Matt. 5:1, 2; 10:5-42; II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:2, 3).

And, in like manner, those having "the testimony of Jesus Christ" during the Tribulation will have been removed into heaven, probably be taught by Christ, then be sent back to the earth with *a commission and a message*.

Comparing the Different Accounts

A further connecting link between the man-child and those who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom during the Tribulation can be derived by noting the presence or absence of certain parallel Scriptures in the Jewish sections of all three Olivet Discourse accounts (Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's), studying these sections after this fashion in the light of Revelation chapter twelve.

Israel's travail is mentioned in Matt. 24:8 and Mark 13:8, but there is no mention of this travail in the parallel section of Luke's account (21:8-19).

In like manner, Matthew and Mark both call attention to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10); but Luke, in his account, is completely silent concerning this event.

The connection between Israel's travail, the birth of the man-child, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth during the last half of the Tribulation is, of course, self-evident. The man-child, brought forth following Israel's travail, is the one who will proclaim this message; and the relationship between the three (travail, man-child, proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom) is further shown in the three Olivet Discourse accounts. *Matthew and Mark record BOTH Israel's travail and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, BUT Luke does NOT record EITHER of these events.*

WHY are *BOTH* Israel's travail and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom recorded in Matthew's and Mark's accounts *but NEITHER one* is recorded in Luke's account? The reason becomes self-evident once the connection between the two events is understood in its proper perspective.

Israel, in travail, brings forth the one who proclaims the gospel of the kingdom. The nation's travail and the proclamation of this message are, in this respect, so inseparably connected that one is not recorded in the Olivet Discourse accounts apart from the other.

Matthew and Mark record BOTH, for the inclusion of one *necessitates* the inclusion of the other; *but Luke does NOT record EITHER*, for the omission of one *necessitates* the omission of the other.

Things in Scripture, such as the preceding, are by Divine design. The Word of God is to be studied by comparing Scripture with Scripture (I Cor. 2:13; cf. John 5:39, 40). The best commentary on Scripture *has ALWAYS been, and will ALWAYS remain*, “Scripture itself.”

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the One Who guides the Christian “into all truth”; and that which the Spirit uses in this respect — “*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” — is that which He moved some forty different individuals over a period of about 1,500 years to record, *the God-Breathed Word* (cf. Ps. 12:6; 138:2; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).

Concluding Remarks:

Israel’s travail, with birth following, is associated with the most severe and intense time of trouble that this world has ever seen or ever will see. The beginning of travail is associated with wars, famines, pestilences, and a shaking of governmental powers during the first part of the Tribulation, preceding the birth of the man-child (Matt. 24:7, 8; cf. Rev. 6:3-6); and this travail will reach its most intense state during the latter part of the Tribulation, the time of “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:6, 7) — with events surrounding wars, famines, pestilences, and a sifting and shaking of governmental powers being brought to an apex — immediately preceding the birth of the nation itself (Matt. 24:9-13; cf. v. 22; Rev. 6:12-17).

(Somewhat of a parallel to this can be seen in modern times. Israel, during the years of the Third Reich in Europe [1933-1945], passed through what is called the “Holocaust.” Then, about three years later, an Israeli nation was born in the Middle East [1948].)

The present Israeli nation will one day pass through a period “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:21). The intensity of Israel’s travail will be commensurate with the troublesome times; and the birth of the nation at the conclusion of this period will result in Israel subsequently finding herself in a completely antithetical position (as it were, an antithetical position commensurate with the travail).

Israel will be *restored, realize her calling, and be placed in a position wherein such a time of trouble can NEVER exist again.*

3

THEN...

Israel, During and Following the Tribulation

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:9-14).

Matthew 24:9-14 describes Israel’s condition and certain events pertaining to the nation, beginning in the middle and covering the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. Timewise, events in these verses are synonymous with events in the continuing twelve verses (vv. 15-26, furnishing commentary for the previous verses), and with events in Rev. 12:6, 13-17.

When the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel (in the middle of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy), the nation will, in an apparent almost immediate sense, *be delivered up for affliction.*

The mass killing of millions of Jews will then commence; and the Jewish people, at this time, as never before, will begin to be hated by ALL the nations of the earth (v. 9).

Jews themselves during this time, because of existing conditions, *will even begin to betray and hate one another; and false prophets will arise among the people, leading many astray (vv. 10, 11; cf. Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).*

Scripture relates the matter of internal turmoil among the Jewish people during this time *to their becoming lawless*. Their previous “love” for one another will, as a result, *grow cold, bringing about dire consequences* (v. 12). Betrayal of and hatred for one another, along with the work of false prophets (all among the people themselves), will produce a condition aiding the set goal of the enemy — *the utter destruction of Israel* (cf. Ps. 83:4).

And this evidently reveals another reason why “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (v. 22).

The general plight of the Jewish people during the last half of the Tribulation is given in these few, brief verses. And the statement is then made that *the one enduring to the end would be saved* (v. 13).

This *can ONLY have to do with physical deliverance out of the Tribulation*. Those Jews who survive the afflictions, mass killings, hatred by the Gentiles, and the lawlessness of their own people, will be physically delivered at the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

Concluding this part of the Olivet Discourse, reference is made to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.

This gospel will be proclaimed throughout the earth by one hundred forty-four thousand Jews during the time described by verses nine through thirteen. The ministry of these Jewish evangelists will thus occur during *the darkest hour of human history*. Their ministry will occur during the reign of Antichrist, amidst all the trouble, terror, and conflict within his kingdom; and it will occur during the time Satan makes his last, desperate attempt (preceding the Messianic Era) to destroy the nation of Israel.

Comparing Matthew and Revelation

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:4-39) has to do with events during the seven-year Tribulation, leading into and including the return of Christ and attendant events at the end of the Tribulation. The corresponding section in the Book of Revelation covers fourteen chapters (chs. 6-19a), and events in these chapters are arranged in a parallel fashion to the way events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse are arranged.

Note this section of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew’s gospel.

Verses four through fourteen provide a *brief summary* of events which cover the entire seven years of the Tribulation, and this summary concludes with the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.

Then, verses fifteen through twenty-six provide *additional details* concerning specific events which will occur *in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*, the same time covered by verses nine through fourteen; and these verses lead into events surrounding the return of Christ as revealed in verses twenty-seven through thirty-one.

In the Book of Revelation, the Tribulation begins with the opening two verses of chapter six, and judgments during and immediately following this seven-year period are revealed through the opening of the seven seals (6:1-17; 8:1), the sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2-9:21; 10:1-7; 11:15-19), and the pouring out of the seven vials (16:1-21).

The first six seals are opened in chapter six, and the judgments wrought through the opening of these seals provide an overview of events and judgments during the entire seven years of the Tribulation, as seen in Matt. 24:4-13. Then, note that at the end of this overall coverage in both Matthew and Revelation, the Spirit of God moved the two writers to record information relating to *the same thing*—*the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom* (v. 14).

In Matt. 24:14 a brief statement is given concerning the proclamation of this message; and corresponding Scripture clearly reveals that this ministry of the Word will be carried out by a “remnant” removed from the nation of Israel, the one hundred forty-four thousand of Rev. 14:1-5 (*ref. Chapter II in this book*).

It is this, as in Matthew’s gospel, which appears in what can only be the parallel section in the Book of Revelation. In Rev. 7:1ff, the one hundred forty-four thousand first come into view; and these verses immediately follow the opening of the first six seals, forming a perfect parallel between Matt. 24:4-14 and Revelation chapters six and seven.

As in Matthew’s gospel, so in the Book of Revelation — the emphasis is upon events which will occur *in the middle and during the last half of the Tribulation*, NOT during the first half.

In Revelation chapter six, the opening of the first seal (depicting the man of sin going forth “conquering, and to conquer”) is

the only part of the chapter which has to do with *events occurring during the first half of the Tribulation*. The remainder of the seal-judgments *can ONLY* point to events occurring either in *the middle, during the last half, or immediately following the Tribulation*.

And it is so with the remainder of that portion of the book dealing with judgments resulting from the breaking of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, or the pouring out of the vials.

Even in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Dan. 9:24-27, the emphasis is upon events occurring in *the middle and during the last half of the Seventieth Week, NOT upon events occurring during the first half*. Actually, the only event in this prophecy which will occur during the first half of the Seventieth Week is the ratifying of the covenant between the man of sin and Israel; and this same emphasis upon events occurring during *the middle and last half of the Week* carries over into Matt. 24:4-39 and Rev. 6:1ff.

The first half of the Tribulation, compared to the last half, will be a time of *relative peace*; but this *peace* will come to *a sudden end* when the man of sin breaks his covenant with Israel.

This is what the opening of the second seal evidently refers to:

“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon [the same rider as on the white horse when the first seal was opened, but *now* revealed in his true color] to take *peace* from the earth...” (v. 4).

Then, the remainder of the seal-judgments describe conditions and events following this, occurring during and immediately following the last half of the Tribulation (vv. 5ff).

In the Book of Revelation, immediately following the opening of the first six seals, an entire chapter (ch. 7) is given over to the sealing of the one hundred forty-four thousand and the results of their ministry (paralleling events in Matt. 24:4-14). Beyond this parallel point in the Olivet Discourse, specific details are given concerning events occurring during the time covered by previous Scripture (that is, events in vv. 15-26 occur during the same time as events in vv. 9-14, providing additional commentary).

And it is the same in the Book of Revelation. Specific details are given concerning events occurring during the time covered

by previous Scripture (that is, events in chs. 8ff occur during the same time as certain events in chs. 6, 7, providing additional commentary). Then, in both the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation, the entire matter leads up to and includes the return of Christ with attendant events (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21).

The Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse is, in the preceding respect, *a little Apocalypse* — Matt. 24:4-13 corresponds to Rev. 6:1-17; Matt. 24:14 corresponds to Rev. 7:1-17; Matt. 24:15-26 corresponds to Rev. 6:3-19:6; and Matt. 24:27-31 corresponds to Rev. 19:11-21.

“Time” surrounding the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials is something that *MUST* be understood in its proper perspective if one is to grasp the issue at hand. The thought is not at all that once one seal has been opened, revealed events associated with that particular seal must come to pass before the next seal can be opened. No! Events covered by a particular seal can still be occurring during the time other seals are opened, or even during the time the trumpets are sounded or the corresponding vials of wrath are poured out.

It seems evident that many judgments revealed under the opening of these seals will overlap one another and extend throughout a large portion of the Tribulation, with some evidently still occurring when the last trumpet is sounded and the corresponding last vial is poured out, which will be following the Tribulation and Christ’s return.

The seven trumpet judgments form the judgments revealed when the seventh seal is broken; and the seven vial judgments correspond to the seven trumpet judgments, providing a further description of these judgments (*cf.* Rev. 8:1-10:7; 11:15-19; 16:1-21).

The sounding of the seventh trumpet and the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial bring matters to the same end.

Note Rev. 10:7; 11:15; 16:17:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [the angel with the seventh trumpet], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, “The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever” (ASV).

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’”

The words, “It is done,” closing the statement concerning the pouring out of the seventh vial, are the translation of a perfect tense verb in the Greek text. The perfect tense refers to action completed in past time, with the results of that action existing during present time in a finished state.

At this point in the book, everything will have been brought to pass; and the mighty angel seen at this time in chapter ten can then act in the described manner — placing one foot on the land and the other on the sea (taking complete control of the earth), extending the opened scroll toward heaven (the seven-sealed scroll now unsealed, opened, showing that all the judgments have been completed), allowing the announcement by other “great voices” seen in Rev. 11:15:

“The kingdom of the world is become...”

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapters XVIII, XIX in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)

The One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand

The one hundred forty-four thousand Jews who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation will be saved during the first half, with the complete group having been saved preceding the middle of the Tribulation. This is what is referenced by *the birth of the man-child* at the mid-point of the Tribulation in Rev. 12:5. Then, *the birth of the entire nation*, “all Israel,” will occur at the end of the Tribulation (Isa. 66:8; cf. Rom. 11:26 [ref. Chapter II in this book]).

The one hundred forty-four thousand will apparently be saved through the ministry of the two witnesses in Revelation chapter eleven, whose ministry will span the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

Then, the nation itself will be saved at the end of the Tribulation by the personal appearing of Jesus Christ. They will “look

upon" the *One Whom they pierced* (Zech. 12:10).

And in the antitype of Joseph revealing himself to his brethren (Gen. 45:1ff), Christ revealing Himself to the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1ff), and Christ revealing Himself to the two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13ff), Christ will reveal Himself to the nation of Israel, resulting in a nation being "born at once" (cf. Isa. 66:7, 8; Zech. 12:10-14; 14:6).

The salvation of individuals comprising the one hundred forty-four thousand will evidently occur at different times throughout the first three and one half years of the Tribulation, with the last of these individuals being saved near the end of this time.

Israel is seen in travail throughout this time but does not give birth until near the middle of the Tribulation, after all of the one hundred forty-four thousand have been saved.

In this respect, the gestation period for the nation bringing forth the man-child will be about three and one-half years. And the last of the one hundred forty-four thousand being saved will bring the nation's pregnancy to full-term, with the birth of the man-child in Rev. 12:5 then taking place.

There are individuals today who teach that the Church must somehow have a part in the salvation of the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation. Such would be brought to pass in one of two ways:

1) By their conversion near the end of the present dispensation through Jewish evangelism (and their remaining behind at the time of the rapture).

2) Or, by Christians proclaiming the salvation message to the Jewish people near the end of this present dispensation so they will have it in their possession during the Tribulation (ultimately resulting in the salvation of the 144,000).

The teaching that the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation are to be saved during the present time is, of course, completely fallacious. A Jew saved today finds himself positionally "in Christ," a part of *the one new man*; and, in this standing, there is no distinction between saved Jews and saved Gentiles. They have *both relinquished their national identities* and will *both be removed together at the time of the rapture*, with *NO distinction made between the two*.

There can be no such thing as a saved Jew being left behind at the time of the rapture to go through the Tribulation, no more so than a saved Gentile being left behind at this time to go through the Tribulation.

Then, beyond that, the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation *are NOT* to be saved during the present dispensation anyway. They are to be saved *AFTER the Church has been removed, during the Tribulation.*

The entire matter is *Jewish and future*. It will be *THEN, NOT NOW, that Israel's travail and the resulting subsequent birth of a child occur.*

The teaching that Christians are to proclaim the salvation message to the Jewish people during the present time so that they will have it during the Tribulation, resulting in the salvation of the one hundred forty-four thousand, is a false form of Jewish evangelism. The whole concept behind any form of evangelism, to *the Jew or the Gentile*, is to proclaim the gospel message in view of people being saved during the present dispensation, *NOT* during the coming Tribulation.

To further complicate the matter insofar as man is concerned, there will be *EXACTLY* twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel who will be saved and form the man-child at that future time (the tribe of Manasseh replacing the tribe of Dan). *And Jews DON'T even know what tribe they are from today, much less Christians.* Their genealogical records were destroyed in 70 A.D.

But God knows; and when the time arrives, the necessary number from each of the tribes will be saved and called forth to form *a first fruit of the nation and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation.*

The Gospel of the Kingdom

The message which will be proclaimed to the Gentiles worldwide by the one hundred forty-four thousand during the Tribulation is called "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24:14). This will be a message for the unsaved, *which can ONLY be a salvation message with the coming kingdom in view.*

Scripture refers to the proclamation of the gospel of the king-

dom during only two brief periods — *one past, and the other future* (though the kingdom was in view at other times in God’s message proclaimed to Israel [e.g., messages through the Prophets during the time of the O.T. theocracy, or the re-offer of the kingdom by the Apostles and others during the Acts period]).

The gospel of the kingdom *in past time* was proclaimed to Israel by John the Baptist, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy immediately preceding and during the time of Christ’s earthly ministry (for about three and one-half years); and the gospel of the kingdom, at *a time yet future*, will be proclaimed to the Gentiles throughout the earth by one hundred forty-four thousand Jews during the Tribulation (for about three and one-half years).

The gospel of the kingdom proclaimed to Israel in the past was simply:

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7).

The message was directed *only* to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “The Gentiles,” and even “the Samaritans,” had no part in this message (Matt. 10:5, 6).

This was a message calling upon God’s people to repent, with a view to the proffered kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom was “at hand [pointing to something ‘nigh’ or ‘near’]” for two reasons:

- 1) The King was present.
- 2) The Kingdom itself could have then been established had the nation heeded the message.

Israel though *did NOT repent*. The Scribes and Pharisees “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [‘before men,’ ‘in the presence of men’]” (Matt. 23:13). They *were NOT* going to enter the kingdom, and they did everything within their power to prevent the nation itself from entering. The Scribes and Pharisees were the ones directly responsible for Israel’s rejection of the King and the Kingdom, terminating with the crucifixion of the King Himself.

The proffered kingdom (the kingdom of the heavens) was taken from Israel, with a view to an entirely separate and distinct “na-

tion" becoming the recipient of the associated heavenly promises and blessings previously offered to Israel.

And herein lies the reason why the Church was called into existence.

The kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). This is the "nation" in I Peter 2:9, comprised of Christians, an entirely separate and distinct creation and *the ONLY people presently in existence who are in a position to bring forth fruit* (II Cor. 5:17; cf. Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

The message presently being proclaimed to Christians relative to the coming kingdom though *is NOT* the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom of the heavens *is NOT* "at hand." The King is *absent*, and the Kingdom *CANNOT* be established during the present time.

We are living during *a dispensation between two times*:

- 1) The time when the kingdom was "at hand" (Messiah was present and the kingdom could have been established).
- 2) The time when the kingdom *will once again* be "at hand" (the period immediately preceding Messiah's reappearance to establish the kingdom).

The message which is to be proclaimed during the present time to those who are to have a part in the kingdom of the heavens is more properly called "the word of the kingdom" or "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (Matt. 13:19; II Cor. 4:3, 4; I Tim. 1:11, ASV).

This message is for *the saved ALONE* and has to do with *an inheritance in the future*; it has to do with *future positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom*; it has to do with *the salvation of the soul, NOT with the salvation which Christians presently possess*.

The gospel of the kingdom which is to be proclaimed to the Gentiles throughout the earth during the Tribulation will have to be first and foremost *a salvation message*, for the message will be directed to *the unsaved*. During those days, the kingdom, unlike today, will be "at hand"; and the message, though not the same as the message proclaimed to Israel in the past, can once again be called "the gospel of the kingdom."

"Salvation" in the future proclamation of the gospel of the

kingdom to unsaved Gentiles will be *with a view NOT ONLY to eternal verities BUT also with a view to the kingdom being "at hand."*

The time during which the message will be proclaimed, the recipients of the message, and the name of the gospel would necessitate a conclusion of this nature.

Salvation with a view to the coming kingdom is *NOT a new thought or message at all*. In fact, this message has been around for almost six millenniums and *is really the ONLY type salvation message which should ever have been or should ever be proclaimed to man.*

Man was created with a view to the kingdom, with a view to ruling the kingdom (Gen. 1:26-28); his fall and subsequent salvation were because of and with a view to the kingdom (his fall, with a view to disqualifying the man to rule; and his salvation, with a view to placing man back in the position for which he had been created); then, Israel was brought into existence with a view to the kingdom (Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6); and individuals are being saved today with a view to the kingdom (I Thess. 2:12; Heb. 2:5, 10; I Peter 5:1-10).

Thus, the apparent relationship of *salvation to the kingdom* during the Tribulation, through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, *should NOT* be thought of as something any different at all. *Man, regardless or whether he knows it or not, has ALWAYS been saved with a goal in view, which has ALWAYS been seen as the kingdom;* and the matter will be *NO different* for individuals saved during the Tribulation.

ALL is with a view to the kingdom.

Results of the Message

The results of the ministry of the one hundred forty-four thousand are given in Rev. 7:9-17 (*cf.* 6:9-11), immediately following the record of their being sealed (vv. 1-8). These verses though do not include *ALL* the results of the ministry of the Jewish evangelists. These verses refer *ONLY* to those slain for their testimony during the Tribulation. Multitudes of others who heed the message will survive those days and be alive when Christ returns.

Those slain for their testimony during that future time are described as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (v. 9). The Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation will have a ministry foreshadowed by Jonah's ministry when he, after the Word of the Lord came to him *the second* time, heeded God's command and went to Nineveh.

As a result, all Nineveh heard God's message and believed.

This though, in its fulfillment in the antitype, refers more specifically to the results of the ministry of *ALL Israel during the Millennium*. The entire nation, as Jonah, will heed God's command when it comes to them *the second* time and go forth as God's witness to the ends of the earth; and the results of the nation heeding God's command will be as seen in the type: *ALL Nineveh*, referring in the antitype to *ALL the Gentiles throughout the earth*.

But the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation, *a first fruit* out of the nation of Israel, will realize *a first fruit*, as it were, in the antitype of the prophecy of Jonah. *The main harvest* will then follow as the entire nation goes forth with God's message of salvation during the Millennium.

Saved Gentiles slain during the Tribulation are seen in heaven in Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 15:2-4; 20:4-6. The remainder of the saved Gentiles during this time will appear at the judgment of the nations following the Tribulation (Matt. 25:32-40). The ones slain are said to be *innumerable*, and the ones who live through the Tribulation will undoubtedly be *of similar numbers as well*.

The main harvest though, relative to all Israel in the antitype of Jonah and Nineveh, will be the unsaved Gentiles from the nations surviving the judgments of the Tribulation who will form the nations on earth at the beginning of the Millennium.

These Gentiles will then form the nucleus for a far greater population which will come into existence as time goes on during the Millennium, as Israel continues to carry God's message of salvation to the Gentile nations worldwide.

Both saved Gentiles slain for their testimony during the Tribulation (Rev. 20:4) and a segment of those surviving the Tribulation (those designated as "sheep" in Matt. 25:31-46), are seen to occupy *regal positions in the kingdom*. This is referred to in Rev. 20:4 as "they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years," and it is referred to in Matt. 25:34 as "inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world [referring back to the restoration of the material creation and the creation of man in Genesis chapter one].”

Thus, a central purpose for a *first fruit* out of the nation of Israel to proclaim God’s message during the Tribulation will be *the procurement of additional sons to rule in the kingdom*.

Then, those from the Gentile nations who survive the Tribulation (unsaved Gentiles) will populate the millennial earth, bringing to pass the fulfillment of God’s promises to both Israel and the Church.

Israel is to be placed at the head of the nations on the earth, with the nations being reached by and blessed through Israel; and Christians are to rule over the nations from a heavenly sphere as co-heirs with Christ.

Thus, the entire matter is for purposes which move even beyond the Millennium, during that time when all things will have been brought under subjection and the kingdom delivered up to God the Father (I Cor. 15:24-28).

And these purposes of God involve His dealings with three classes of individuals which will exist throughout time and eternity — Jews, Christians, and Gentiles — with regality extending beyond the new earth out into the universe itself (Rev. 22:1-5).

Concluding Remarks:

The time during which the one hundred forty-four thousand Jewish evangelists conduct their ministry will be during the reign of Antichrist. This will be the time when the mark of the Beast will be given and Beast-worship instituted. Apart from this “mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” no one will be able to “buy or sell” during those days; and refusal to participate in Beast-worship will carry the sentence of *death*.

It will also be during those days that innumerable Gentiles worldwide, from all nations, will heed the message carried by the Jewish evangelists. All who so heed this message will come under the sentence of death, for they will not only refuse the mark of the Beast and refuse to participate in Beast-worship, but they will bear a true witness concerning Jesus Christ.

The revealed form of death for the followers of Christ during the Tribulation will be *the guillotine* (Rev. 20:4), though this may simply be an expression used in Scripture referring to the numerous forms that death may take in that day. Followers of Christ will be slain for *their testimony*, which, in that day, can only be part and parcel with their refusal to participate in Beast-worship.

The situation will be somewhat similar (but far more intense) to conditions which existed among the followers of Christ in the Roman world during the first century.

In those days the Romans deified the emperor and participated in emperor-worship. Christians though worshipped the one true and living God, rejecting emperor-worship; and multitudes were slain for *the testimony which they held*.

Persecution in the Roman world under ten different emperors, viewing themselves as gods, occurred over a period of two and one-half centuries. The far more intense persecution of the followers of Christ during the Tribulation will occur under one world ruler over a period of three and one-half years, who will declare himself to be "God" (II Thess. 2:4), demanding worship as such.

This man, as the Roman emperors, will be deified (through his own actions and those of the False Prophet); and the persecution of the followers of Christ which began in the Roman world under Nero will be concluded during the last half of the Tribulation in a worldwide kingdom under the man of sin.

Numerous saved Gentiles from the Tribulation will realize an inheritance in the kingdom, both those slain and others who survive the Tribulation. And it will be *THEN* that the question asked by the Tribulation martyrs will be fully addressed:

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

The Beast and False Prophet will have previously been cast into the lake of fire, awaiting Satan and his angels, along with all of the unsaved dead extending all the way back to man's creation, being cast into the lake of fire one thousand years later (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15). And there they will reside, together, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

4

IN THE HOLY PLACE

Striking at the Heart of a Portending Theocracy

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand [‘standing’] in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).

Then...” (Matt. 24:15, 16a).

The Exodus of the Israelites under Moses about 1445 B.C. was followed by things entirely new in the camp of Israel. The people of Israel were called out of Egypt to go forth as *God’s firstborn son and exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy.*

BUT, before entering into this land and exercising these rights, certain preparatory steps had to be taken in the wilderness of Sinai.

The Israelites had to FIRST come into possession of two things:

- 1) *The Law.*
- 2) *The Tabernacle.*

Both the Law and the Tabernacle were associated with Israel placed in her covenanted land exercising the rights belonging to the firstborn, within a theocracy.

The Law consisted of rules and regulations governing the people of God as they exercised these rights; and the Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God among His people, forming the central place of worship within the theocracy for the kingdom of priests called out of Egypt.

The Israelites were to enter into the land and, as God’s firstborn son, *NOT ONLY* live under God’s revealed Law *BUT* exercise the rights of primogeniture; and, through so doing, the nations were *NOT ONLY* to be *ruled by Israel* (kingly aspect of the birthright) *BUT* the nations were to be *reached by and blessed through Israel* (priestly aspect of the birthright).

The Theocracy

God recognizes *Israel ALONE*, among all the nations, as *His firstborn*. In this respect, *Israel is NOT to be* “reckoned among the nations” (cf. Num. 23:9; Deut. 14:2).

Israel was called out of Egypt for particular purposes associated with the nation’s firstborn status and, resultingly, associated with the Gentile nations. *And God’s purpose surrounding Israel’s calling MUST be realized*—*if NOT in Biblical history, THEN in Biblical prophecy*:

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [‘without a change of mind’]” (Rom. 11:29).

God has NOT and He will NOT change His mind concerning the reason He called Israel into existence.

1) *A Beginning Under Moses, the Law, the Tabernacle*

In the wilderness of Sinai, during the first year following the Exodus, God equipped His people for the task at hand. *The Law* (with its rules and regulations) and the instructions for the *Tabernacle* (with its priestly ministry and worship) were given to Moses in the Mount. This was followed by the building of the Tabernacle and the preparation of the priests.

The work on the Tabernacle was completed a few days short of one year following the Israelite’s march toward the Red Sea and the subsequent departure from Egypt; and upon completion of this work, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:33, 34).

At this point in history, *a theocratic kingdom came into existence*. And with the Israelites in possession of the kingdom with its Glory, Laws, etc., *the nation was ready to enter the land and realize her calling before ever reaching Kadesh-Barnea*.

Later though, at Kadesh-Barnea, the Israelites failed to enter the land and occupy the position for which they had been called. They believed the negative report of ten of the twelve spies who had been sent into the land ahead of the nation, expressing unbelief in God’s promise concerning the nation and the land.

This was followed by the overthrow of an entire generation during the next thirty-eight and one-half years as God caused the

nation to wander in the wilderness, outside the land.

Then, following the death of Moses, under the leadership of Joshua, the second generation of Israelites entered the land, passing through the Jordan opposite Jericho. And this new generation, unlike the unbelieving prior generation at Kadesh-Barnea, was ready to *inhabit the land through conquest and realize the reason they had been called out of Egypt.*

However, even though the Israelites moved in and eventually inhabited the land (Joshua 21:43-45), they *did NOT* follow the Lord's command completely. They *did NOT* slay or drive out all of the inhabitants (Judges 1:19-33). This resulted in the Gentile nations in the land being *a thorn* in the side of Israel, with their gods becoming *a snare*, causing the Israelites to fall into idolatry time after time (Judges 2:1-4, 12-14; cf. I Kings 16:30-33).

During this time the Lord raised up judges to deliver the people. But, following each deliverance, the people, before long, would cease harkening to the judges. And continued unbelief and disobedience of this nature brought about *NOT ONLY* the Lord's anger *BUT* the Israelites' failure to realize to any extent the position in the land to which they had been called (Judges 2:16ff).

The unbelief and disobedience of the Israelites was the reason for such things as "famine" rather than "plenty" in the land during the days of Ruth (Ruth 1:1), and Israel's defeat at the hands of the Philistines at the time the ark of the covenant was taken by the enemy (I Sam. 4:1-22). This unbelief and disobedience eventually even led the people of Israel to reject the Lord's rule in the theocracy and desire a king to reign over them, "*like all the nations.*"

The Lord acquiesced to their request (I Sam. 8:5-7). And Saul was anointed the first king over Israel. However, Saul did not follow the Lord's command concerning Amalek.

Saul had been instructed to "smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not..." But Saul spared "Agag the king of the Amalekites" and saved "the best" of certain animals belonging to the Amalekites "to sacrifice unto the Lord."

As a result, Saul, the first king over Israel, was rejected by the Lord; and David was anointed king in Saul's stead (I Sam. 9:17; 15:1-23; 16:13).

Then, the day eventually came when Saul was put down in battle and his crown taken and given to David (I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:1-10).

2) *The First Temple*

David, as he began his reign, sought to rectify what centuries of disobedience on the part of the Israelites had done. He followed the Lord God of Israel, he sought to unify the people, he had the ark of the covenant brought to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:1ff), and he sought to build a house for the ark (which would be the first Temple).

It did not fall David's lot though to build the Temple. This task awaited his successor — *his son, Solomon* (II Sam. 7:11-13), with *his greater Son, Jesus*, to ultimately build the Millennial Temple (Zech. 6:10-13).

David reigned over Israel for forty years, and this was followed by Solomon reigning for the same length of time. That which was begun by David during his reign carried over into the kingdom under Solomon, and *not only* was the Temple built during Solomon's reign (I Kings 6:1-8:11) *but* the kingdom reached heights previously unknown.

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding...

And Solomon's wisdom exceeded 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” (I Kings 4:25, 29a, 30, 31).

Conditions of this nature though *did NOT* extend beyond the days of Solomon. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who succeeded him at the time of his death (I Kings 11:43), rejected the ways of his father; and a division in the kingdom resulted.

At this point there *not only* came into existence northern and southern segments of the kingdom *but* also more than one place of worship. Jeroboam, ruling in the northern segment of the kingdom, established places of worship at Bethel and Dan, seeking to prevent the people from returning to the Temple in Jerusalem. And, *not only* did he establish these new places of worship, *but* he introduced

idol worship and non-Levitical priestly ministry in these and other places, further destroying the unity of the nation (I Kings 12, 13).

A divided nation and sin in the camp continued *UNTIL* God eventually allowed the Assyrians to come down into the land in the eighth century B.C. and take the northern ten tribes into captivity and the Babylonians to come over into the land in the seventh century B.C. and take the southern two tribes into captivity.

The nation which had been called out of Egypt under Moses to dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and rule over all the Gentile nations within a theocracy, being a blessing to these nations, was removed from the land and scattered among and placed in subjection to the Gentiles.

Because of continued disobedience extending over centuries of time, rather than Israel being placed *at the head of the nations*, God's firstborn son was placed *at the tail of the nations*; and further, the blessings which were to come to all the Gentile nations through Israel *could NOT now be realized*. These blessings were associated *with Israel in the land within a theocracy, exercising the rights of the firstborn* (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Lev. 26; Deut. 28).

The Babylonian captivity, which began *the Times of the Gentiles* (a time extending down to the present day), also marked the end of the Old Testament theocracy — a theocracy extending back in time over eight and one-half centuries, going all the way back to the days of Moses. The Glory of the Lord had filled the Tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai during the days of Moses; and after the ark had been removed from the Tabernacle and placed in the "most holy place" in Solomon's Temple, the Glory of the Lord then filled the Temple (Ex. 40:16-38; I Kings 8:1-11).

The Glory remained in the Temple until a few years after Nebuchadnezzar's initial invasion of Jerusalem, occurring about 605 B.C. The Glory then departed the Temple (about 586 B.C.), and Jerusalem and the Temple were then destroyed (cf. II Kings 24, 25; Dan. 1:1, 2; Ezek. 10:4, 18; 11:23).

3) *The Second Temple*

Solomon's Temple, succeeding the Tabernacle as the dwelling place for the ark and the Glory of God, was in existence for slightly

more than four hundred years. Then, following the seventy-year Babylonian captivity, a second Temple was built by a remnant returning to the land under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1:1ff). This remnant returned about 535 B.C., but, due to problems among the inhabitants of the land, the Temple was not completed until about twenty years later (Ezra 4:1ff).

This was the Temple in existence when Christ was upon earth the first time (called “Herod’s Temple” at that time because of a complete rebuilding work which had begun during the reign of Herod the Great [Zerubbabel’s Temple, over the years, had fallen into a state of ruin]); and this was the same Temple destroyed, along with the city of Jerusalem, by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The Glory though did NOT return when the second Temple was completed by the remnant returning under Zerubbabel. Although God recognized this Temple as *His house* (for the shadow of regality still remained [cf. Matt. 21:13; 23:2]), there was *NO* theocracy as had previously existed. *The Times of the Gentiles* was running its predetermined course; and this period of time *had to be completed* before Israel could have a Temple with the Glory and corresponding theocracy restored.

Deity NEVER entered the Temple built by the remnant returning from the Babylonian captivity and destroyed almost six centuries later by the Romans. Christ, God manifested in the flesh, appeared more than once in outer portions of this Temple (Matt. 21:12; Luke 2:27), but *NEVER* in the Temple itself.

This is plainly shown by the use of two different Greek words for “Temple.” Christ appeared in the *hieron* (a word referring to the outer court, porches, or other structures subordinate to the Temple); but He *did NOT*, at any time, appear in the *naos* (the Temple itself).

4) Third and Fourth Temples

Solomon’s Temple and Zerubbabel’s Temple are only two of four Temples mentioned in Scripture. The others are the *Tribulation Temple* and the *Millennial Temple*.

Israel will rebuild the nation’s Temple at a time prior to the middle of the Tribulation, a Temple which will be destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem; and the Lord Himself will then build

the Millennial Temple when He returns (Dan. 9:27; II Thess. 2:4; Zech. 6:12, 13; Ezek. 40ff).

The Tribulation Temple, as Zerubbabel's Temple (though it also will contain no Glory) will be recognized by God as *His house* (Rev. 11:1). The same shadow of regality will still remain, with the restoration of the theocracy awaiting a future date. *The Times of the Gentiles* will still be in effect, and a Temple with the restored Glory and the corresponding restoration of the theocracy to Israel cannot occur during this time.

The entire matter of "restoration" awaits two things:

- 1) *The completion of the Times of the Gentiles.*
- 2) *The Lord Himself building the Temple, the Millennial Temple* (Ezek. 43:1-5; 44:4; cf. Hag. 2:9).

From the time of the construction of the Tabernacle during Moses' day to the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., about fifteen hundred years passed. And during that time, the people of Israel were only without the Tabernacle or the succeeding Temple for slightly less than one hundred years (discounting the time [about 100 years] that the ark of the covenant was separated from the Tabernacle and in the hands of the Philistines [I Sam 4:11; II Sam. 6:17]). The Jewish people were without their Temple during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity and the succeeding time which it took the returning remnant to rebuild the Temple.

However, since 70 A.D., when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans under Titus, the people of Israel have been without a place for God to dwell among His people for over nineteen hundred years (though God did not dwell among his people from the time of the Babylonian captivity to 70 A.D.).

NEVER in the history of the nation, prior to the destruction of the second Temple, had generations of Jews come and gone without direct contact with either *the Tabernacle or the Temple*; and *UNTIL* the recent establishment of Israel as a nation in the land once again (on May 14, 1948), the issue of a *third Temple* could not even be raised. *ALL of this though is about to change. Israel is about to have a third Temple, and then a fourth.*

The Third Temple — How?

The question is not, “*Will* a third Temple be built?” The Word of God is clear on this matter. A Temple *WILL* exist in the land during the days of Antichrist, and his assuming power over the earth in the middle of the Tribulation is closely connected with action he will take concerning this Temple.

Antichrist will, at that time, *desecrate the Temple*; and he will subsequently *destroy the Temple* (reasons for his desecration and destruction of the Temple will be discussed later in this chapter).

The question concerning the building of a third Temple should thus be, “*How...?*,” or “*When...?*,” not “*Will...?*”

There are two major events which have occurred during modern times, with a third yet to occur, which can only be seen as progressively setting the stage for the rebuilding of the Temple:

- 1) *The first* was the establishment of the New State of Israel in 1948.
- 2) *The second* was the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem (the place of the Temple site) during the Six-Day War of 1967.
- 3) *The third* will be that day when the Temple site (a part of the Old City still controlled by the Moslems) will come under Jewish control once again.

During the battles which immediately followed Israel’s declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, the Old City of Jerusalem was lost to the Arabs; and the Jews were subsequently barred from this part of Jerusalem, with this situation persisting for the next twenty years; but during the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel captured certain portions of land previously controlled by the Arabs, and among these portions of land was *the coveted Old City of Jerusalem*.

And at the very point of conquest, the interest of the captors became focused on one thing in the Old City — *the Wailing Wall*, also called “the Western Wall.”

This wall was the *ONLY* visible surviving part of the second Temple, and it was *to this place* that the captors of the Old City wanted to go. And in many cases, because of unfamiliarity with the Old City, guides had to be employed to direct the troops to the Wailing Wall.

Then, as word began to spread, it was not long before government leaders, rabbis, and others began to enter the Old City for the express purpose of going to the Wailing Wall.

They came, stood before the wall, and wept; and during the days and years since, they have continued to come to pray and weep.

For the Jewish people, *there is presently NO place on earth like the Wailing Wall.* This is the closest that they can presently come to their Temple, the central place of a past theocracy and the central place of worship for the people ruling in the theocracy; and the entire matter dates all the way back to the days of Moses — almost three and one-half millenniums. *Thus, it is then NO wonder that they continue to frequent this place day after day after day, crying and weeping.*

But the Wailing Wall is still NOT enough. The Jewish people want that which the Wailing Wall only portends, calls to mind. They want their Temple once again, for they know that without the Temple there can be NO restoration of the kingdom and the accompanying Glory.

Unfortunately though, the Temple site, located just beyond the Wailing Wall, is seemingly occupied at the present time by *the Dome of the Rock.* And Jewish law prohibits the disturbance of any religious shrine in Israel (In keeping with this law, after the Israeli troops captured the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, Jewish authorities turned over responsibility of the Temple Mount to an Islamic charity).

To further complicate matters, the Dome of the Rock is not just any religious shrine. It dates all the way back to 691 A.D. and is *the third* most sacred site in the world for the followers of Islam (after Mecca and Medina).

The Dome of the Rock stands over the site from which Moslems believe Mohammed ascended (leaped) to heaven. And to even further complicate matters, the El Aksa Mosque, built after the Dome of the Rock, is also on the Temple Mount. Thus, even though the Jewish people control the Old City of Jerusalem, *they do NOT control the Temple Mount;* and, under Jewish law, they are prohibited from disturbing Moslem structures on this site.

Not only is this the case, *but* for Israel to disturb these structures under present conditions, especially the Dome of the Rock, would inflame the entire Moslem world.

Officials in Israel today, viewing this situation, state, “Anything

seen as a threat to the Dome of the Rock would be *highly provocative* to Moslems.” And the head of the Supreme Moslem Counsel in Jerusalem echoed the attitude of followers of Islam toward this place some years back when he stated, “The Moslems are *prepared to die for this place* [a statement actually referring to the Temple Mount, which would include land upon which both the Dome of the Rock and the El Aksa Mosque are built]”; and there are over one-half billion adherents to Islam worldwide today.

What then will transpire to allow Israel access to this site? If an answer can be provided, it would have to be within the framework of the covenant yet to be made between the man of sin and Israel.

Through breaking his covenant with Israel, this man will enter into the Holy of Holies and declare himself to be God (*cf.* Dan. 9:26, 27; 11:30-32; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 11:1, 2). In view of this, the ratifying of the covenant will likely involve a restoration of the Mosaic Economy, with its Temple and sacrificial system.

Accordingly, this man will evidently be the one to bring about a solution to the present dilemma in which the Jewish people find themselves. We know from Dan. 11:39 and Joel 3:2 that he will be instrumental in dividing the land (establishing borders) in the Middle East; and the Temple site, *the MOST important piece of real estate in all the land, could ONLY form the major part of the territory in view.*

To move beyond the preceding thoughts though is to move beyond information which Scripture provides. Things which we can know for certain are these:

1) A seemingly intractable situation *presently exists*, denying the Jews access to their Temple site.

2) The seemingly intractable situation *WILL one day be resolved, giving the Jews access to this site* (and this is one reason, among others, that Antichrist undoubtedly fits into the picture, *bringing about a resolution to the problem in that coming day*).

3) The Jews *WILL rebuild their Temple*, and, seemingly, it will have to be built where the Dome of the Rock now stands (*ref.* Shlomo Goren’s calculations in next section, bottom of p. 53, top of p. 54). *It MUST be built, as the two previous Temples, in the “place which the Lord shall choose”* (Deut. 12:10-14).

In 1903, Great Britain offered the Jewish people land for Zionist purposes in British East Africa. The Jewish people though *would NOT even consider such an offer*. They were interested in *ONE tract of land ALONE — the land in the Abrahamic covenant*.

In like manner, the Jewish people *would NEVER* consider building their Temple on any site other than where it has stood on two previous occasions. The Jews have an affinity for *a particular land insofar as the nation is concerned*, and they have the same affinity for *a particular place in that land insofar as the Temple is concerned*.

The Third Temple — When?

“We took an oath today, while capturing the city. On our blood we took an oath that we will never give it up, we will never leave this place. The Wailing Wall belongs to us. The holy place was our place first, our place and our God’s place. From here we do not move. Never! Never!”

— Gen. Shlomo Goren
(June 7, 1967)

After the Old City of Jerusalem fell to the Israeli troops during the Six Day War in June 1967, the commander of these troops stood at the Wailing Wall and announced, “None of us alive has ever seen or done anything so great as he has done today.”

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan stood at the Wailing Wall that day and vowed, “We have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to depart from it again.”

General Shlomo Goren, chief rabbi of the Israeli armed forces, stood at the Wailing Wall on that day and cried out, “We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic Era for the Jewish people...”

Why did a troop commander and the defense minister view the Wailing Wall after this fashion? Why did the chief rabbi of the Israeli armed forces associate Jewish possession of the Wailing Wall with the nearness of the Messianic Era? The answer is singular and very simple: *This site NOT ONLY reflects on a past Temple and theocracy BUT it also portends a future Temple and theocracy*.

From 1967 to 1994 (at the time of his death), Gen. Shlomo

Goren became a leading authority on the Temple Mount. A few years before he passed away, he called attention to a well-worn personal map of this Mount, dated June 21, 1967 (two weeks after the Israeli army captured the Old City). His calculations and recalculations of the area during about two decades led him to *ONLY one conclusion: A third Temple would have to be positioned in the same place as the Dome of the Rock.* When asked about how this could be brought to pass, his reply was simply, "It's a big problem."

The time when the third Temple will be built can be derived from Dan. 8:13, 14:

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed [220 days (7 months, 10 days) short of the full 2,520 days (7 years)]."

According to these verses, there will be "two thousand and three hundred days" from the point when sacrifices begin in the rebuilt Temple to the end of the Tribulation. This would place the beginning of sacrifices in the rebuilt Temple in the eighth month of the first year of the Tribulation.

Thus, Dan. 8:13, 14 places the building of the Temple during the first seven or eight months of the Tribulation. This fact fits perfectly with the covenant to be made between Antichrist and Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation, as well as the fact that the Jewish people will be offering sacrifices in a rebuilt Temple three and one-half years later.

Desecration of the Temple

Why, when breaking his covenant with Israel, will the first recorded act of the Antichrist be a desecration of the Holy of Holies in the rebuilt Temple? The answer is obvious if one understands the connection of *the Temple* with *theocracy* and Israel's status as *God's firstborn son*. The Temple is the dwelling place of God as He

resides in the midst of His people and rules through His people in the theocracy. And *the ONLY people* which God has ever placed or ever will place on this earth in such a position are *the Jewish people*.

Israel ALONE is God's firstborn among the nations, and *the Temple* is God's dwelling place among His people as they exercise the rights belonging to the firstborn.

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. 9:4).

The Temple figures prominently in Antichrist's actions in the Book of Daniel (8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), in Matthew's and Mark's accounts of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14 [note that Luke, in his account, records the destruction of Jerusalem at this same time rather than the desecration of the Temple]), in the mention of Antichrist in the Pauline epistles (II Thess. 2:4), and in the Book of Revelation (11:1, 2). The significant feature in all these passages, save the account in the Book of Revelation, is Antichrist desecrating "the holy place."

This is the event given in Scripture to mark the breaking of his covenant with Israel and the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This man is going to enter into the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple (the place where God dwelt in Solomon's Temple during the Old Testament theocracy) and announce that "he is God." The covenant will then be null and void, and the Great Tribulation will begin.

Note what this man will, in actuality, be doing by this act. He will be striking at *the very heart of the theocracy* and *the very position which Israel occupies as firstborn* (even though the theocracy will not then be in existence, allowing Israel to exercise the rights of the firstborn).

This man will be the world ruler under Satan, and he will seek to squelch the ONLY rule which could EVER interfere with his by three acts:

- 1) *By destroying the central place for this rule (the Temple).*
- 2) *By destroying the city from which this rule would emanate (Jerusalem).*
- 3) *By destroying the people who, directly under God, would administer this rule (the Jewish people).*

This is the reason that the Jews are told to “flee” for their lives when they see this man “standing in the holy place” (Matt. 24:16ff).

He is going to desecrate the Temple (Dan. 9:27), *THEN* destroy both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:26; Luke 21:20-24), and *THEN* seek to eliminate the Jewish people from the face of the earth (cf. Matt. 24:16-22; Rev. 12:13-17).

And the *ONLY* thing which will stand in his way, apart from God’s providential protection of His people, is “time”:

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake [Israel’s sake] those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:22).

Concluding Remarks:

Israel’s destiny insofar as *the Temple, the theocracy, and the nation’s position with respect to the Gentile nations* is concerned was set when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees.

God’s promise to Abraham pertaining to *the land and blessings* (Gen. 12:1-3) anticipated God’s statement to Moses pertaining to *Israel’s firstborn status* (Ex. 4:22, 23; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6).

And the entire matter anticipates that day, in the coming age, when Israel will occupy the position for which the nation was called out of Egypt under Moses.

Israel though *MUST first* pass through the “time of Jacob’s trouble.”

Israel *MUST first* see a third Temple stand in the land, one which will house *NO* Glory, with there accordingly being *NO* theocracy.

Israel *MUST first* experience the full end of the “desolation” in Dan. 9:27 and Matt. 23:38, which includes *the Jewish people, the Temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel*.

ONLY THEN will Messiah return, build the Temple Himself, and restore the nation within a theocracy.

ONLY THEN will Israel realize her position as *firstborn among the nations*.

5

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Israel Awaiting the Last of the Hamans, Hitlers

“Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:16-22).

Biblical prophecy, as it pertains to the Jewish people and to the surrounding Gentile nations, is centered mainly around events which will occur *shortly before, at the time of, and immediately following the return of Israel’s Messiah.*

Biblical prophecy, in this respect, centers itself mainly around God’s future dealings with the Jewish people, along with the final form of Gentile world power.

The persecution of the Jewish people by Gentile powers under Antichrist during the last half of Daniel’s Seventieth Week is a subject appearing extensively throughout both Old and New Testament prophecy. Beginning with the writings of Moses in the Book of Genesis and terminating with the writings of John in the Book of Revelation, Scripture is replete with information pertaining to Israel in the Great Tribulation during the days of Antichrist.

And Scripture is also replete with information concerning how the whole of the matter will turn out at the time of Christ's return following the Tribulation.

Beginning with Moses

Biblical prophecy pertaining to Israel actually begins in the opening chapters of Genesis, long before the nation was brought into existence. This early beginning can be seen in a type-antitype treatment of the experiences of Cain and Abel, in Gen. 4:1ff (reflecting back on that seen in the previous chapter — man's fall and God's revealed way of redemption).

1) *Cain and Abel*

Cain, *the firstborn*, rejected God's way, ultimately resulting in his rising up against Abel and slaying him.

Four thousand years later, Israel, *the firstborn*, rejected God's way, ultimately resulting in the nation rising up against Christ and slaying Him.

In each instance it was one brother slaying the other brother. The blood of Abel cried out to the Lord "from the ground," but *the blood of Christ* speaks "better things than that of Abel" (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24).

Cain's subsequent experiences typify the subsequent experiences of *Israel*. Cain became "a fugitive ['a wanderer'] and a vagabond in the earth," *with every man's hand turned against him*.

The history of Israel since the crucifixion of Christ has been marked by the same circumstances. Israel has been *a wanderer and a vagabond* (cf. Deut. 28:25), with *anti-Semitism following the Jewish people wherever they have gone*.

The ultimate realization of the matter though awaits the Great Tribulation. It will be during that future time and immediately following that the words of Gen. 4:14, 15 will find their complete fulfillment in the nation of Israel and the Gentile nations.

God, at the beginning, stated unequivocally:

"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gen. 4:15).

Transferring this over into the antitype and looking at the outworking of the principle set forth in Gen. 12:3 — “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” — that which will befall the nations coming out of the Great Tribulation has already been prerecorded. God is going to “make a full end of all the nations” where the Israelites have been driven (Jer. 46:28).

The contextual setting of this passage reveals that these are nations within the kingdom of Antichrist, *a worldwide kingdom, which will include ALL the nations of the earth*. Anti-Semitism in that day will break out on an unprecedented, worldwide scale; and God, at the end of the Tribulation, will deal with the nations accordingly, in complete accord with Gen. 4:15; 12:3.

(Note three things relative to God dealing with the Gentiles following His Son’s return at the end of the Tribulation:

1) The judgment of saved Gentiles coming out of the Great Tribulation in Matt. 25:31-46 — saved out of the anti-Semitic nations of the end time — *will be on the basis of their treatment of the Jewish people during the time immediately preceding.*

2) The anti-Semitic Gentile armies under Antichrist *will THEN be brought into the land of Israel to be destroyed* [cf. Ezek. 38, 39; Joel 2:1-11, 20; 3:2-16].

3) And all surviving Gentile nations *will THEN go into the Millennium, to be reached by and blessed through Israel, with the welfare throughout this time still dependent on their attitude toward and treatment of the Jewish people* [Isa. 62:1ff; Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-21].)

2) Noah and the Flood

Leaving the experiences of Cain and Abel, one can move on to the experiences of Noah during and beyond the Flood to see another facet of the experiences of Israel during and beyond the Great Tribulation.

Noah passed safely through the Flood, as Israel will pass safely through the Great Tribulation (cf. Gen. 7:1ff; Isa. 26:20, 21).

Then, beyond the Flood there was a new beginning, with human government placed in the hands of man (Gen. 8:20-9:6).

And this is *EXACTLY* as it will be yet future. After Israel passes safely through the Great Tribulation, government by man will

then be the issue at hand.

The association of *the Flood* during Noah's day with *the Great Tribulation* yet future is clearly drawn in Scripture:

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man...

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back” (Luke 17:26, 31).

The reference in verse thirty-one is to the same time described in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, disclosing events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation (Matt. 24:17, 18; cf. vv. 37-39).

3) *Joseph and His Brethren*

Then, the experiences of Joseph's brethren during and following a time of famine set forth in type another view of Israel during and following the Great Tribulation.

Joseph's brethren, during the famine, found themselves in such dire straits that *they had NO place to turn BUT to Joseph*.

Joseph provided deliverance from the famine; and following Joseph revealing himself to his brethren, Joseph's brethren went forth with the message that he was “alive” and “governor over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:54-45:26).

The brethren of Jesus, as the brethren of Joseph, will pass through the identical experiences.

During a time of famine, the Great Tribulation, *they will have NO place to turn BUT to Jesus* (although they will NOT know Him, as the brethren of Joseph did NOT know him). Deliverance will be effected, Jesus will reveal Himself to His brethren (*EXACTLY as in the type*), and (*also EXACTLY as in the type*) the brethren of Jesus will then go forth with the message that He is “alive” and “governor over the entire earth” (“Egypt” is always a type of *the world* in Scripture).

4) *Exodus*

Moving beyond Genesis, the entire Book of Exodus constitutes one complete, comprehensive type concerning Israel yet future,

during and following the Great Tribulation.

The book begins with the Israelites under subjection to an Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt and terminates with the Israelites delivered from Egypt and in possession of *the old covenant, the Tabernacle, and the Glory*.

Thus will it be in the antitype yet future.

The Israelites will find themselves scattered throughout the earth in subjection to another Assyrian ruler, the Antichrist. Deliverance will be effected through the One greater than Moses, and the Israelites will subsequently find themselves in possession of *the new covenant, the Temple (Millennial Temple), and the Glory (restored)*.

The Israelites subjugated by the Assyrian in Egypt during the days of Moses sets forth that portion of the type pointing to the coming Great Tribulation.

The Israelites cried out to God for deliverance:

“And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them” (Ex. 2:24, 25).

Thus will it be yet future. As the Israelites cried out to God during a time of trouble in the type, they will do the same during a time of trouble in the antitype; and as deliverance was effected in the type, so will deliverance be effected in the antitype; and as Israel was delivered for a purpose under Moses, the nation will be delivered for the same purpose under Christ.

The old covenant, the Tabernacle, and the Glory were all connected with Israel's status as *God's firstborn son*.

A theocratic kingdom was brought into existence during Moses' day, and *this SAME kingdom* will be restored yet future through Israel coming into possession of *the new covenant, the Millennial Temple, and the Glory* (see “Anti-Semitism,” Appendix I in this book).

As *the bush* (typifying “Israel”) burned during Moses' day without being consumed (Ex. 3:2), so has *the same bush* been burning throughout the centuries since that time without being consumed.

The persecution under the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt was *ONLY* the beginning of persecution after persecution.

But the most intense persecution of all will occur during the Great Tribulation. This is the time when *the fire* seeking to consume *the bush* will seemingly burn out of control.

Note though very carefully the words of Ex. 3:4: "God called unto him [Moses] *out of the midst of the bush...*"

And it was the same at a later time during Daniel's day as during Moses' day, when God was *in the midst of the fire with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah* (Dan. 3:23-27).

The fire *had NO* power over the bush in Exodus or the three Hebrews in Daniel, even though during Daniel's day the furnace was heated "*seven times more than it was wont to be heated*" (v. 19).

The matter continues the SAME today, and it will be the SAME during the Great Tribulation.

The type has been SET, and it MUST occur in the antitype after EXACTLY the same previously set manner.

5) Comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual

The preceding, drawn mainly from the first two books of Moses, has only touched upon the rich supply of material available in the Old Testament concerning Israel and the nation's national future.

The Old Testament is one continuous revelation concerning Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46), and a revelation concerning Christ *MUST* always be interwoven within a revelation concerning Israel and/or the Church. This is the manner in which the Old Testament has been written, and the Old Testament *MUST* be studied after the manner in which it has been structured.

The Old Testament is filled with history, and God has interwoven *throughout this history* innumerable types in order to teach His people great spiritual truths concerning the antitype.

Actually, *ALL historic events in the Old Testament form types.*

"All these things were our examples ['happened as types for us'], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples ['typically,' 'as types']: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world ['the ages'] are come" (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

These things occurred *under God's sovereign control of ALL things in order that He might have these recorded experiences to draw upon to later teach His people deep spiritual truths*. There is *NO* such thing as haphazard experiences within the framework of God's plans and purposes.

Man, in possession of God's Revelation, *MUST* recognize "how" and "why" this Revelation was written.

He *MUST* also recognize that an understanding of this Revelation necessitates "spiritual discernment" (I Cor. 2:14; cf. John 16:13-16).

Such discernment comes about simply by the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself revealing to the believer that which He moved "holy men of God" to record in time past (II Peter 1:21).

Any Scripture, such as the text at hand from Matt. 24:16-22, *MUST* be understood by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual"; and it is the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself Who brings things to light after this fashion, as the believer studies and meditates on the Word (I Cor. 2:13).

When Ye See...Flee...

The warning which Jesus gave in Matt. 24:15ff is for the Jews in the land of Israel when the Great Tribulation begins. It will be during those days that Israel, as a recognized nation in the Middle East, will cease to exist.

When Antichrist turns against Israel, the nation will fall in an inconceivably swift fashion; and the very fate of the continuance of the Jews as a people on earth will then seemingly lie in his hands.

(Note that *God, in the midst of the bush*, will allow this to occur, just as He allowed the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities to occur, the events of the Romans under Titus in 70 A.D. to occur, etc.

BUT, God will NOT remove Himself from the bush.)

The Jewish people are told to flee into "the mountains" (Matt. 24:15, 16 [*world kingdoms, i.e., the nations; cf. Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 21:20-24*]), "the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6, 14-16 [*Gentile lands, as distinguished from the land of Israel; cf. Ex. 19:1; Heb. 3:8, 17*]).

Those who do not escape will either be killed or sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world. And along with this will be the destruction of both the rebuilt Temple and the city of Jerusalem (cf. Dan. 9:26; Joel 3:6-8; Zech. 13:8, 9; Luke 21:20-24).

It should be clearly understood that the destruction in Dan. 9:26 and Luke 21:20-24 has to do with events during the coming Tribulation, *NOT* with events in 70 A.D. as is often taught.

The destruction seen in Dan. 9:26 *MUST occur within the scope of time covered by the Seventy Weeks* and, contextually, is seen in connection with Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel in verse twenty-seven. Both the text and context in Luke 21:20-24 show that this section also has to do with *the SAME time* as Dan. 9:26 — the coming Tribulation rather than with events in 70 A.D.

(All events seen in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy *MUST occur during time covered by the prophecy, NOT outside this time*, as the destruction by the Romans under Titus in 70 A.D.)

One thing which often leads to the erroneous conclusion that Dan. 9:26 has to do with the destruction by Titus and his Roman legions in 70 A.D. is the association of the fourth part of Daniel's image (the "legs of iron" and the "feet part of iron and part of clay") with *Rome*. The "legs of iron" are said to refer to *the Roman Empire in history*, with the "feet part of iron and part of clay" referring to *a revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation*.

Under this teaching, the kingdom of Antichrist will be *a Roman kingdom*. And a supposed reference is seen in the prophecy which extends from Titus in 70 A.D. to Antichrist yet future through the expression, "the people of the prince that shall come" [v. 26 (i.e., a supposed reference to *the Romans* in both history and prophecy)].

This expression though is *an idiom*, referring to *the future prince himself* (note Dan. 7:18, 27 where this same type expression is used and explained).

This is one reason some Bible teachers take such an interest in the European Common Market. They are looking for ten nations to arise in the latter days within the territory covered by the old Roman Empire, ultimately forming a ten-kingdom revived Roman Empire under Antichrist.

Any teaching surrounding a revived Roman Empire though *has NO scriptural basis whatsoever, simply because the Roman Empire in history had NOTHING to do with fulfilling prophecy concerning the "legs of iron" on Daniel's image.*

NOR will the kingdom of Antichrist be made up of a ten-kingdom European confederacy. His kingdom will be a Middle East kingdom, centered in Babylon; and his ten-kingdom confederacy will evidently be comprised of Middle East nations, forming his worldwide power base.

Daniel's image was seen *STANDING in Babylon. This image depicts a Babylonian kingdom under different nations extending over centuries of time. The past rulers ALL reigned over a world kingdom from Babylon during the Times of the Gentiles.*

When the Times of the Gentiles began about 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar's power emanated from Babylon.

When the Medes and Persians came in and took the kingdom in 536 B.C., the reign from Babylon continued.

Then, when the Grecians under Alexander the Great came in and took the kingdom in 330 B.C., the center of world power remained in Babylon.

Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., and his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. Following this, the kingdom of Babylon gradually faded from view as a world power, *NOT to be seen again as a center of world power UNTIL the days of Antichrist.*

And he too, as his predecessors, *WILL reign from Babylon.* This is what necessitates Babylon being restored in the latter days as a center of world power and commerce, as seen in Scripture (cf. Isa. 13:19, 20; 14:4; Jer. 50:1ff; 51:1ff).

The Roman Empire, although the next world power following the decline of the Babylonian kingdom, *had NO connection with Babylon.* The center of power for the Roman Empire was Rome.

And to fit within the scope of Daniel's image, this center would have had to be in *Babylon.* Since it was *NOT, the Roman Empire CANNOT possibly fit within the framework of events in the Book of Daniel.*

One should note very carefully that *Daniel identifies ALL four parts of the image (cf. Dan. 2:31-45; 7:3-8); and there is NO allusion whatsoever to the Roman Empire.*

It is clear from Daniel chapter eight (vv. 8-14, 21-25) that it is the kingdom of Antichrist which follows the Greco-Babylonian kingdom in both Dan. 2:40-43 and Dan. 7:7, 8, 19-26.

Antichrist will march into Jerusalem as *the last king of Babylon*, the one whom Nimrod, *the first king of Babylon*, typified millenniums before (cf. Gen. 10:8-10).

He will seek to do that which no one has ever been able to accomplish — *the utter, complete destruction of the Jewish people* — and he will then come under the sentence of Gen. 4:15; 12:3. The outworking of the principles set forth in these verses *MUST* be realized — *blessings or curses, depending on one's attitude toward and treatment of the Jewish people* — and they will be realized three and one-half years later when this man's kingdom lies in ruins.

The Stone "cut out without hands" is going to smite *the image at the feet* (Dan. 2:34). *The image will be destroyed, ground to powder*; and *the Stone* will become "a great mountain," covering the entire earth (Dan. 2:35, 44, 45).

The reference is to the destruction of the final form of the kingdom of Antichrist by Christ (the "Stone" *smiting the image at the feet*), with the kingdom of Christ ("a great mountain") then becoming the worldwide kingdom upon earth (cf. Isa. 2:1-4).

Troubled Waters

Israel is in the land today awaiting Antichrist. By no stretch of the imagination though is the nation in the land in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the regathering of Israel in the latter days (e.g., the vision of *the valley of dry bones* in Ezek. 37:1ff).

A remnant has returned to the land under a Zionistic movement. And a remnant of this nature *MUST* be present in the land near the end of the age in order for numerous Biblical prophecies to be fulfilled (e.g., the ratifying of the covenant in Dan. 9:27, or the events in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse).

But the return of a remnant under a Zionistic movement, forming an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, *has NOTHING to do with the prophesied regathering of Israel in either the Old or New Testament Scriptures.*

The present remnant in the land, constituting the nation of Israel, has returned in *unbelief*; this remnant has returned *before the time that Scripture prophesies the nation will, or even can, return*; and this remnant *ONLY includes a part of world Jewry* (presently about two-fifths).

Israel's restoration, as prophesied in the Old Testament, occurs *AFTER the Tribulation, AFTER the completion of Daniel's full Seventy Weeks; this restoration occurs AFTER Israel's Messiah returns, under His personal supervision.*

Israel, at this time, will return to the land *in belief, NOT in unbelief*; and this restoration will involve *resurrected Old Testament saints as well as those Jews surviving the Great Tribulation and being saved by the personal appearance of Christ at the end of the Tribulation.* It will be a restoration of "the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. 36:24-28; 37:1-28; 39:25-29; Dan. 12:1, 2).

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

Events surrounding Israel's presence in the land today are much like events surrounding Jonah's presence on the ship headed for Tarshish in Jonah 1:3ff.

Jonah had been instructed to carry the message of the One True and Living God to the Gentile city of Nineveh, but he refused and headed in the opposite direction.

With Jonah on board the ship headed for Tarshish, a great storm arose on the Mediterranean Sea. And the storm became so intense that the men on the ship were afraid that the ship was about to be destroyed. Jonah, though, was down inside the hold of the ship asleep (1:3-5).

The reason for the storm was then revealed: *Jonah, out of the Lord's will, was on board the ship* (1:6-10). The only solution to bring about a calm was then revealed by Jonah himself. He *MUST* be removed from the ship by being cast into the sea (1:11, 12). And, *ONLY* when this was done did the sea cease raging (1:13-15).

1) "The sea" in Scripture has a peculiar reference to *the Gentile nations* (cf. Rev. 13:1; Dan. 8:8, 9).

2) “Jonah, out of the sea, on board the ship,” can only typify *Israel removed from the Gentile nations, dwelling in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

3) “The storm on the sea,” resulting from Jonah’s presence on the ship, can only point to *resulting turmoil among the Gentile nations.*

And here is the revealed, underlying main reason that turmoil exists on an unprecedented scale among the nations of the earth today, particularly those nations in the Middle East.

Jonah, out of the Lord’s will, was on board the ship. That is to say, Israel, out of the Lord’s will, is in the land.

And the trouble among nations today rises to the same intensity as the storm on the Mediterranean Sea during Jonah’s day:

“...there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken” (1:4).

The nations of the earth today, in turmoil, as the raging sea during Jonah’s day — with the matter centered in the Middle East — continue trying to find solutions to existing problems. But the matter is *completely OUT of their hands.*

The nations have *NO* understanding of the basics of the existing problems; and even if they did, *there would be NOTHING whatsoever which they could do to bring about any type lasting resolution (cf. Hosea 5:15-6:2).*

God, in His sovereign control of all matters, has allowed a remnant to return to the land of Israel in order to bring about concluding events during Man’s Day and usher in the Day of the Lord. With this remnant *in the land, OUT of the Lord’s will,* the principle set forth in the first chapter of Jonah *MUST be in force.*

The sea MUST rage; that is, the Gentile nations MUST be in turmoil. And this is *EXACTLY* what is happening, *something which the nations do NOT understand at all.*

How long will this turmoil among the nations continue?

The answer is quite obvious: *so long as Israel is in the land, OUT of the Lord’s will.*

Thus, don't look for peace among the nations during the present time, during Man's Day. *It's NOT going to occur.* In fact, just the opposite will occur, with matters only continuing to get worse and worse.

The sea MUST rage. The prophets HAVE spoken. And Israel is going to occupy her present position right on into the Tribulation, with *the nations continuing — in a deteriorating manner — in their present state of unrest and turmoil, as they VAINLY seek to solve existing problems.*

This is the primary reason why *wars, rumors of wars, and nation rising against nation* (Matt. 24:6, 7) will mark conditions during even the early years of the Tribulation.

These are conditions which exist today, will exist when the Tribulation begins, and will continue unchanged during the first half of the Tribulation. Israel will remain in her present state until the middle of the Tribulation, *necessitating a continuance of the principle set forth in the first chapter of Jonah.*

The Antichrist, by removing Israel from the land in the middle of the Tribulation, will bring an *END* to the principle presently in operation.

But the waters *are NOT* going to become calm, as when Jonah was cast into the sea. In fact, because of Antichrist's subsequent actions — Seeking to do away with, utterly destroy, the Jewish people — *just the opposite will occur.*

The sea will really begin to rage at that time, for another Biblical principle will come into operation:

"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain [Israel], vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (Gen. 4:15).

Or, as in the words of Gen. 12:3:

"I will...curse him that curseth thee."

Note the word "sevenfold" in Gen. 4:15. "Seven" is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view.* "Complete judgment" is involved. It has to do with making "a full end of all the nations" (Jer. 46:28).

The epitaph and the reason for this epitaph have thus been pre-written upon the kingdom of Antichrist at a time before it even exists:

“Fallen because of this man’s destructive, ill-treatment of God’s firstborn son, Israel.”

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book on Jonah, titled, *O Sleeper! Arise, Call!*)

Except Those Days Should Be Shortened

Because of Antichrist’s anti-Semitic actions, which will involve genocide itself, there will be a time of trouble “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” And Scripture depicts conditions on the earth becoming in such turmoil during this time that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matt. 24:21, 22).

This man will seek to accomplish that which all his predecessors, dating back to the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt during Moses’ day, failed to accomplish.

He will seek to bring about what men have called “the final solution to the Jewish problem.” He will be instrumental in not only destroying the present existing nation of Israel in the Middle East but also in eradicating two-thirds of the world’s Jewish population (over 9,000,000 by today’s count [Zech. 13:8, 9]); and he will do this mainly in the short space covered by the last half of the Tribulation, along with the days immediately following, immediately following Christ’s return.

Men under Hitler, Heydrich, Eichmann, *et al.* in the Third Reich during the years 1939-1945 killed 6,000,000 Jews in Europe, seeking to produce a Jew-free Europe. This killing occurred on such a mass scale that giant crematoriums had to be constructed to dispose of the bodies.

The Antichrist will be instrumental in slaying over 9,000,000 Jews in less than half that time. And he will accomplish this feat during a time when the carnage among the Gentile nations will become inconceivable, for multiplied millions, extending into

billions, of Gentiles will die worldwide during this time as well.

Revelation 6:8 reveals that one-fourth of the earth's population will die during this time (about two billion by today's count). This is how tumultuous *the sea* will become after Antichrist makes his final move against Israel.

The turmoil resulting from Antichrist's anti-Semitic, genocidal activities on a worldwide scale is the reason that no flesh on the face of the earth would be saved apart from those days being shortened. *A complete destruction of this nature, apart from Divine intervention, is the way God has seen fit to reveal the intensity of the holocaust which this man will bring upon the world.*

God though will intervene, and for "the elect's sake [Israel's sake]" those days will be shortened.

Part and parcel with the preceding, the most intense part of the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll will evidently occur *during the climactic part of these judgments, particularly when the fifth and sixth trumpets sound [fifth and sixth vials are poured out (further descriptions of the same judgments)].*

And these judgments will occur *with Christ present on earth, immediately prior to the destruction of Gentile world power [Armageddon, the seventh trumpet and vial judgments, bringing matters to an end (cf. Joel 3:15, 16; Matt. 24:29-31; Rev. 6:12-17)].*

Note *the intensity* of these climactic judgments in Rev. 9:1-21. And this is evidently where judgmental conditions will reach an apex, *necessitating a shortening of the days for mankind's very survival [Matt. 24:22].*

The 2,520 days comprising the seven-year Tribulation CANNOT be shortened, *for this number is unchangeably set [though God, if He so desired, could still work with time in this respect [time is relative, not constant (shortening time, but still completing 2,520 days)].*

But, there is a *five-month period in Rev. 9:5, 10 which is NOT unchangeably set [time following the 2,520 days, time given for the judgments of the fifth trumpet to occur].* As well, unless these days were cut short, this five-month period would evidently extend beyond the seventy-five-day period at the end of Daniel, which it seemingly can't do.

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Acts Period*, Chapter XII, "Continuing in Revelation," pp. 177-181.)

Concluding Remarks:

The Jewish people and the world at large are about to pass through a time of trouble *which has NO parallel in history*; and conditions during this time will rapidly deteriorate into a state *portending the very destruction of mankind itself*.

The cause of the matter can be laid directly to *anti-Semitism and the outworking of the principles set forth in Gen. 4:15; 12:3*.

Anti-Semitism on an unprecedented scale will correspondingly result in trouble in the kingdom of the perpetrator on *NOT ONLY a corresponding unprecedented scale BUT on a far more intense unprecedented scale* (cf. Hosea 8:7).

And the end of the matter will be:

- 1) *God's intervention "for the elect's [Israel's] sake."*
- 2) *God's "sevenfold" vengeance upon the kingdom of Anti-christ.*

6

FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS

"If They Speak Not According to This Word..."

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not". (Matt. 24:23-26).

When Christ was on earth the first time, *rejection* rather than acceptance marked His ministry. The Scribes and Pharisees, Israel's main religious leaders, saw to that. They followed Christ in His ministry, seeking, at every turn, to counter His message and the signs which He was performing. And, through this means, they "shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men ['before men,' 'in the presence of men,' *i.e.*, in the presence of those in Israel]" (cf. Matt. 12:9ff; 15:1ff; 16:1ff; 23:1ff).

Because of the actions of the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ, looking two centuries ahead through His statement in John 5:43, called the Jewish people's attention to where *this rejection would ultimately lead*:

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

And this person, to one day appear to the Jewish people — evident from that stated in this verse and this man's revealed actions — *will appear in a similar Messianic respect to the way Christ appeared, though a completely false respect*. He, in this manner,

will evidently be the one to deceive the Jewish people through providing a way for them to rebuild their Temple on the Temple Mount, with a reinstated Mosaic Economy. These things, from all indication, will form the heart of the covenant which this man makes with Israel, seen in the manner in which, three and one-half years later, he breaks this covenant (*ref.* Chapter IV in this book).

At that time, he will enter into and desecrate the Holy Place, cause the sacrifices associated with the rebuilt Temple to cease, and declare himself to be God.

And when he breaks the covenant which he will have previously made with “many” in the nation, revealing himself in his true colors, he will seek to *cut Israel off* “from being a nation; that the name of ‘Israel’ may be *no more in remembrance*” (Ps. 83:4).

The sequence of events beginning in the latter part of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, has to do with Israel in the last half of the Tribulation. According to Matt. 24:23-26, “false Christs, and false prophets,” will appear during this time, continuing from their appearance during the first half of the Tribulation (v. 5); and, just as the Antichrist and his False Prophet (Rev. 13:1, 11) will have appeared in a *deceptive, Messianic manner at the beginning of the Tribulation*, these “false Christs, and false prophets” will subsequently appear in a similar deceptive manner and seek to *further deceive the Jewish people*.

These false Christs and false prophets will appear at an *appropriate time for deception*, for Israel will seemingly be at the mercy of Antichrist, *who will show no mercy*. The nation in this position will be in *dire straights, in desperate need of help, and undoubtedly in a very vulnerable position*. And it will be during these days that the Jewish people will be brought *to the end of themselves, to the place where they will have no recourse other than to cry out to the God of their fathers for deliverance from their affliction* (Ex. 2:23).

It will be prior to the time God answers their cry (Ex. 2:24, 25; 3:7-10) that the false Christs and false prophets of Matt. 24:23-26 appear. These false Christs and false prophets will support their pseudo claim through a manifestation of “great signs and wonders” (v. 24). Such were the credentials of the true messengers to Israel during and following (for about twenty-nine more years)

the time Christ was upon earth the first time, and such will be the credentials of the false messengers to Israel during the days immediately preceding Christ's return yet future.

"Great signs and wonders," manifested by "false Christs, and false prophets," will thus form part of the strategy which Satan will use in his efforts to destroy Israel during the Great Tribulation.

The test for false prophets is given in Deuteronomy chapters thirteen and eighteen. False prophets deceive individuals, as revealed in these chapters, through "a sign or a wonder" *which comes to pass* (a supernatural manifestation of power which comes to pass *through demonic powers, NOT through the power of the Spirit*).

And the object of the sign or wonder manifested by false prophets is to deceive and draw individuals away from the One True and Living God, causing them to follow after "other gods" (13:1, 2).

During the Great Tribulation, Satan, already having deceived the Jewish people through Antichrist and his False Prophet, will seek to further deceive them through *signs and wonders manifested by false Christs and false prophets*, trying to draw them away after "other gods [demons]"; and the entire matter will be brought to pass with an ultimate, planned purpose and goal in view — *the utter destruction of Israel*.

Signs, Wonders, Miracles

A proper understanding of signs, wonders, and miracles can be derived *ONLY through viewing the matter in its correct Biblical perspective, beginning in the Old Testament*. There's *NOTHING* in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament, and governing principles set forth in the Old Testament *MUST* be followed in New Testament interpretation.

1) Manifestations in Different Periods

One thing which is almost completely overlooked in the matter of signs, wonders, and miracles is the fact that miraculous works of this nature, where individuals were/will be empowered by God to perform them, *appear very sparingly in Scripture*. As one moves through the whole of Scripture, he will find *only four periods in both*

history and prophecy where individuals were given or will be given power to perform miraculous, supernatural works, seen as *signs*. And within these *four periods* one will find only a *small minority* of individuals so empowered.

Throughout all of the Old Testament God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles *ONLY on two occasions*; and *ONLY a total of five individuals* received such power.

In each instance there was a definite purpose for the manifestation of these miraculous works, and in each instance there was a definite beginning and a definite ending of the miraculous works.

a) *First Period*

The first period in Old Testament history where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles began immediately preceding the Exodus during the days of Moses, after about 2,500 years of human history had elapsed. God empowered Moses, Aaron, and Joshua to perform supernatural signs — the first time, according to the Biblical record, that man had been so empowered (*cf.* Ex. 4:1-9, 29-31; Num. 14:11; Josh. 24:17; Ps. 78:42, 43).

And these supernatural signs began in a sudden fashion and were terminated just as suddenly as they had begun.

The nation of Israel was led out of Egypt under Moses *to realize the rights of primogeniture in the land of Canaan*, a theocratic kingdom was brought into existence in the wilderness of Sinai, and Joshua (following the wilderness wanderings and the death of Moses) led the Israelites into the land of Canaan, with the same theocracy in view.

Once in the land they were to be established at the head of the nations within a theocracy, with the Gentile nations being reached by and blessed through Israel.

This first period of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture occurred completely within the scope of these events, within the lifetime of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. In this respect, it should be carefully noted that the first appearance of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture had to do with two things:

- 1) *ISRAEL* (the signs were for *the people of Israel*; it is the *Jewish people who require a sign* [I Cor. 1:22]).

2) *The KINGDOM* (the signs had to do with Israel in relation to the theocracy).

The supernatural manifestation of signs during Moses, Aaron, and Joshua's day appeared in connection with the Exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt under Moses and the entrance of the Israelites into and the conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua. And, as previously noted, *these signs had to do with ISRAEL in relation to the THEOCRACY.*

Thus, *a first mention principle* pertaining to signs, wonders, and miracles was established at this point in Scripture. *And ANY true manifestation of a sign* (the event itself) — seen as “a wonder,” with the power behind the sign described by the word “miracle [Gk., *dunamis*, ‘power’]” — *at ANY place beyond this in Scripture, would have to be in line with that seen at the beginning.*

The sign would have to be a supernatural event, brought about by Divine power, designed to capture the attention of individuals as something marvelous, a wonder.

And this supernatural event, *the sign, would ALWAYS have two things in view, else it could NOT be a true Biblical sign. It would ALWAYS have “Israel” and “the kingdom” in view. BOTH MUST be present, in view, for the supernatural event to be seen as a true Biblical sign.*

b) *Second Period*

The second period in Old Testament history where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles occurred about five centuries later during a time of apostasy in Israel.

Elijah and his successor Elisha received power to perform miraculous works, seen as *signs* (cf. I Kings 17:1-24; 18:25-46; II Kings 2:9; 4:1ff; 5:1ff; 6:1ff). These signs were designed to draw attention to God's two prophets and the message which they carried during this time. And, as in the first period, so in the second period — these miraculous works were terminated just as suddenly as they had begun. And they occurred within the lifetime of both Elijah and Elisha, not before, not after.

Once again it should be carefully noted that these miraculous works had to do with *Israel and the kingdom.* This is *the ONLY way*

that they could have been manifested by God's true prophets, for a *first-mention principle* to this effect had previously been established. God, during the days of Elijah and Elisha, was providing the Jewish people with a final opportunity to reverse the path which the nation had taken within the theocracy.

However, as in prior years, the people continued within the same status seen in Isa. 6:9, 10, quoted by Jesus in Matt. 13:14, 15:

“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, ‘By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.’”

And, because of the people's continued unbelief and disobedience, God later allowed the Assyrians and the Babylonians to uproot His people and carry them away captive into Gentile lands.

The preceding two periods constitute *the ONLY times in ALL of Old Testament history where men were empowered to perform signs, wonders, and miracles.*

There were other times when miraculous events occurred (such as the deliverance of the three Hebrew men cast into the fiery furnace, the deliverance of Daniel who had been cast into the lion's den, or the deliverance of Jonah from the place of death [Dan. 3:20-27; 6:16-23; Jonah 2:1-10]), *but these were NOT miracles performed by individuals. These were miracles performed by God on behalf of His people.*

c) *Third Period*

The next period in Scripture where God empowered individuals to perform signs, wonders, and miracles occurred during and following the days Christ was upon earth, recorded in the New Testament.

Christ called His twelve disciples and “gave them power” to perform certain miraculous works, to be seen and understood by the Jewish people as *signs* (Matt. 10:1-8; cf. Matt. 12:38; John 20:30, 31). Later He “appointed other seventy” and gave them

similar powers (Luke 10:1-9). The miraculous works emanating from these powers — *signs* — constituted the *credentials of the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom*.

These signs were in evidence during both the several years of Christ's earthly ministry and the continued ministry of the Apostles during about the first three decades of the Church's existence. They were in evidence so long as the offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel — from 30 A.D. to about 62 A.D., during both the offer of the kingdom to Israel (during Christ's earthly ministry, seen in the four gospels) and during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (during the ministry of the Apostles, seen throughout the Acts period).

There was a manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles throughout both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (throughout the gospels and the Book of Acts) unlike anything seen in the previous almost fifteen centuries of Jewish history.

But the day came when this offer was withdrawn; and signs, wonders, and miracles, which had to do with *the Jewish people and the kingdom*, correspondingly ceased. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed a few years later (70 A.D.), and the Jews in the land were subsequently uprooted from this land and scattered throughout the nations of the earth.

The entire sequence of events surrounding the third period of signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture began with the proffered kingdom of the heavens by Israel's Messiah, and it was concluded following a continued offer of the kingdom after Messiah's return to heaven.

From beginning to end, the matter was Jewish and had to do with the kingdom.

d) Fourth Period

The next and last manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles is future and will occur during and immediately following the Tribulation. It will occur at a time *AFTER* God has resumed His national dealings with Israel.

BOTH the nation of Israel and the kingdom will once AGAIN be in view; and, correspondingly — because God will be dealing with the Jewish people in relation to the theocracy once AGAIN — signs, wonders, and miracles can accompany the message (e.g., the ministry of God's two

witnesses during the Tribulation [Rev. 11:3-6] and events in connection with Christ's return and the revelation of Himself to the Jewish people immediately following the Tribulation [cf. Ex. 1-9, 29-31; Matt. 24:30]).

And as well during this time there will be *a counter manifestation of miraculous works by false prophets* (Matt. 24:23-26; Rev. 13:11-15).

e) *The Full Realization and Manifestation...*

Then, the full realization and manifestation of all things foreshadowed by all the signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture — dating all the way back to the days of Moses and Joshua — *will be realized by Israel during the Messianic Era.*

(E.g., the supernatural healing of an individual in the sign showed that which God would do for the entire nation in the Messianic Era; and the supernatural provision for an individual or group of individuals in the sign showed that which God would, as well, do for the entire nation in the Messianic Era, etc.)

A converted Jewish nation will be restored to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Israel will occupy her proper place in the land with respect to the Gentile nations.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing..." (Isa. 35:5, 6a).

Scriptural manifestations of signs, wonders, and miracles are relegated to certain specific periods in history and prophecy. These miraculous works, from their beginning during Moses and Joshua's day to their final realization and manifestation during the coming age, have to do with *Israel and the kingdom.*

(This is *the key* to understanding signs, wonders, and miracles in Scripture. With this key, one can safely navigate through the pages of Scripture where signs, wonders, and miracles are dealt with; apart from this key, in these same areas of Scripture, one will forever be lost in a sea of misinterpretation, with tragic results often following in one's spiritual life.)

2) Manifestations Today

Since signs, wonders, and miracles emanating from God in either history or prophecy are peculiarly related to *Israel and the kingdom*, it is evident that such would be completely out of place in Christendom today. *Israel* has been set aside, awaiting “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25, 26); and *the kingdom* is being held in abeyance. Thus, *ANY* manifestation of miraculous works in Christian circles today *can be NEITHER a continuation of NOR a restoration of the signs, wonders, and miracles evident NOT ONLY during apostolic times BUT also during Old Testament days as well.*

These supernatural powers were *for times past* (during the days of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Christ, and the disciples), and they are reserved *for times yet future* (during the days of God’s witnesses in the Tribulation. Then, that foreshadowed by these supernatural powers will be realized during the coming day when Christ will be upon earth once again [Rev. 11:5, 6; Isa. 35:1-6]).

Consequently, *ANY* individual, group of individuals, or segment of Christendom in the world today purporting to exercise these powers *are NOT following Biblical guidelines at all.*

Such individuals, from a Scriptural standpoint, *are NOT at all exercising gifts which they claim to be exercising.*

Manifestations of supernatural powers in the world today are no indication that the ones exhibiting these powers are from God. Something which is often overlooked completely is the fact that Satan possesses supernatural powers which can be exhibited through man. Such were in evidence during the first period of miraculous works in Scripture, as they will be during the last period of Man’s Day, immediately preceding the Messianic Era (*cf.* Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; Matt. 24:23-26; Rev. 13:11-18).

Scripture associates *the working of Satan* with “all power and signs and lying wonders” (II Thess. 2:9, 10); and *his efforts through the manifestations of such powers are ALWAYS directed toward one goal — to deceive.*

Efforts to effect his goal through *deception* mark Satan’s introduction into affairs of the human race, establishing a *first-mention principle* which, as any first-mention principle, *remains constant throughout Scripture* (Gen. 3:1-7; Eph. 4:14; I Tim. 2:14; Rev. 13:13, 14).

With these things in mind, one should be able to easily ascer-

tain that signs, wonders, and miracles, as exhibited at any point in history through a supernatural work emanating from God, *do NOT belong in the Church today at all. Any present manifestation would NOT be in keeping with what Scripture teaches in both history and prophecy concerning these miraculous works.*

Within a true Biblical perspective, *signs, wonder, and miracles, as seen in the gospel accounts and the Book of Acts (or in I Corinthians, written during the Acts period), CANNOT presently exist in Christendom today.*

It would be *Biblically impossible for miraculous signs to exist in the Church today.* Consequently, viewing all aspects of the matter, a present exhibition of miraculous signs in the Church would, of necessity, have to be looked upon *ONLY one way: a Satanic deception.*

We're living very near the end of the present dispensation, at a time when the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 is doing its most damaging work. This is also the time when there is an ever-increasing interest among Christians from all denominations in miraculous works — seen in Scripture as *signs* — which is really another way of referring to the interest of Christians today being aligned more with pseudo spirituality than with true spirituality, which is part and parcel with the destructive leavening process presently occurring.

(The preceding is not to say that Christians are doing this in an overt, understanding manner. Rather, as will become clear from Matt. 7:21-23 [discussed later in this chapter], this emanates mainly from *Biblical ignorance regarding the correct place signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in Scripture.*

Never in the history of the Church has there been more Biblical study aids and helps available on the one hand but more Biblical ignorance among Christians on the other; and, as well, never in the history of the Church has there been a time quite like today in regard to *deception*, a time when Christians need to possess a knowledge of the Word of God like never before, though few do.

Accordingly, a Christian today, to avoid being caught up in that which is occurring on almost every hand, *has ONLY one recourse available — a knowledge of the Word of God. IF he possesses this knowledge, he CAN both know what's happening and know how to avoid deception; IF he doesn't possess this knowledge, he NOT ONLY CAN'T know what's happening BUT finds himself in a position where he is ripe for deception.)*

Insofar as Satan's deceptive work within the Church is concerned, he has evidently reserved a final, false manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles to be used as a trump-card; and, insofar as Israel is concerned, Satan will also conclude his dealings with the nation the same way, by using miraculous works — "great signs and wonders," manifested by "false Christs, and false prophets" during the Tribulation.

Why would Satan place such a high premium on miraculous works for his deceptive means? The answer is obvious:

These miraculous works formed *the credentials of the true messengers of God, and they were used in relation to a kingdom*. Satan is the "god of this world ['age']," the one who rules over the present kingdom (cf. Luke 4:5, 6; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 13:2). *He is the great counterfeiter*, and within this framework he has his messengers (who appear as "ministers of righteousness" [II Cor. 11:15]) going forth manifesting *that which appears to be the credentials of the true messengers of God*; and these credentials are used, as were the true credentials by God's messengers in the past, *in relation to a kingdom*.

But now the matter is in relation to the kingdom under Satan. Satan's aspiration, bringing about his fall, was seeking to be "like the most High" (Isa. 14:14). This remains his aspiration today, and this is reflected in *miraculous works in relation to a kingdom*. The "god of this age" is counterfeiting the work of the "most High" in this realm, and he is deceiving multitudes within Christendom.

a) Matthew 7:21-23

In view of that which is presently occurring on an ever-increasing scale in Christendom, note the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:21-23:

"Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say unto me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works?'

And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [lawlessness]'. "

To properly understand this section in Matthew's gospel, it should be clearly understood that eternal verities are *NOT* in view at all. *NO* man will ever stand before the Lord to be judged relative to his eternal destiny. *One's eternal destiny will ALWAYS be a closed matter prior to the time he enters into any future judgment* (John 3:18).

ALL judgment (whether of the saved or the unsaved) will be on the basis of *works*, and if man could ever be brought into judgment where the issue dealt with his eternal destiny, two impossible situations would exist:

1) Man's works would occupy a place within a realm into which *such works CANNOT enter* (into man's presently possessed salvation, an impossibility).

2) *And the finished work of Christ would have to come under judgment* (for man's salvation, in its entirety, is based on that which Christ has done on our behalf).

The subject at hand in Matt. 7:21-23 is *entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens*. The "kingdom of the heavens" is an expression referring to *the rule of the heavens over the earth*. The realm of this kingdom is presently occupied by Satan and his angels (*cf.* Eph. 1:20, 21; 3:9, 10; 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9); and the whole of the kingdom, as it relates to the earth and the rule by man upon the earth, is presently, as well, under the control and rule of Satan and his angels (Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21).

During the coming age though, the heavenly realm of the kingdom will be occupied by Christ and His co-heirs; and the whole of the kingdom, as it relates to the earth and the rule of man upon the earth, will, in that day as well, be under the control and rule of Christ and His co-heirs (*cf.* Dan. 4:17, 25, 26; 7:18-27).

Thus, the matter in Matt. 7:21-23 simply has to do with occupying or being denied a position as co-heir with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom during the coming age.

And, in this respect, following Christ's statement in Matt. 21:43, when the kingdom (the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, that part of the kingdom which had been offered to and had been rejected by Israel) was taken from Israel, that seen in Matt. 7:21-

23 can pertain only to the subsequent recipients of the offer of the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, to those in Matt. 21:43 who would be allowed to bring forth fruit for the kingdom, *to Christians alone* (cf. I Peter 2:9, 10).

To show the complete scope of the matter, note two things:

1) Unsaved individuals *CANNOT* be in view in the passage, for a person is in *NO* position to be judged relative to entrance into the kingdom *UNTIL after he has been saved*.

Then, aside from the preceding, *the unsaved will have already been judged relative to their eternal destiny* (John 3:18).

2) Further, *Israel can NO longer be in view*, for this passage is dealing with “the kingdom of the heavens,” that part of the kingdom which was taken from Israel, that part of the kingdom which is presently being offered to Christians.

Thus, the judgment in view, depicted by Matt. 7:21-23, can, during the present day and time, *relate ONLY to Christians; it can ONLY have to do with the future judgment of Christians*, which will have to do with decisions and determinations rendered at *the judgment seat of Christ at the end of this present dispensation*.

The main thing to be noted about this passage though is the fact that Christ will be dealing with individuals who had previously been involved in *miraculous works, promulgated in the name of the Lord; and these individuals will be denied entrance into the kingdom on the basis of their involvement in these works*.

A question is asked in verse twenty-two (broken down into three parts in the KJV, but actually one question with three parts), and the negative used with this question in the Greek text (*ou*, expecting a “yes” answer, or a “positive” response) indicates that those involved in these works, those asking the question, expected the Lord to acknowledge that *these works had been done under His power and direction*. However, at a time too late, the truth concerning the matter is revealed through *a negative response from the Lord*.

The Lord’s response at this time indicates that *He will have had NOTHING to do with these miraculous works*, which He is seen viewing in a *very negative sense* by associating them with “lawlessness”

(Gk., *anomia*, which should properly be understood and translated as “lawlessness” rather than “iniquity”).

Why, at the judgment seat of Christ, will the Lord look upon Christian involvement in miraculous works after such a fashion as described in Matt. 7:21-23? The answer is quite simple:

Such involvement is *participation in affairs of a kingdom diametrically opposed to the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of Satan*; it is consorting with the enemy and actually participating in the working of Satan as he seeks to counterfeit the work of Christ, adding to the leavening process which he began very early in the dispensation.

(The whole overall thought of the coming kingdom of Christ to replace the present kingdom of Satan is something which occupies the Lord’s attention *far more* than many today may be led to believe. After all, this is *the reason* for man’s very existence, *the reason* for the events of Calvary [providing redemption, allowing man to one day occupy the position for which he had been created], *the direction* toward which everything in Scripture moves, and *the goal* which will one day be reached.

And God is *NOT* going to look lightly upon man moving in a contrary manner to His revealed plans and purposes surrounding this goal, particularly when man consorts with the enemy and seeks to promote the very kingdom of Satan itself.)

Issues of the judgment seat will involve *faithfulness to one’s calling, with the coming kingdom of Christ in view*; and Christians producing works after the fashion described in Matt. 7:22 *are NOT ONLY involved in a realm completely outside the scope of their calling BUT they are producing works which have to do with the present kingdom, NOT works associated with the coming kingdom.*

In that coming day, Christ is going to say to Christians who had involved themselves in these miraculous works:

“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [‘lawlessness’]” (v. 23).

This is a “relative” statement pertaining to the matter at hand. (Note that even if eternal verities were in view, the statement would still have to be “relative,” for God is *omniscient, knowing every person and all things.*) Christ will *NOT* know these individuals relative to:

1) *Their works* (the Lord will have had *NOTHING* to do with their works).

2) *Entrance into the kingdom* (they will be *DENIED* positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom).

Further, the miraculous signs which they call to His attention in that day will be referred to by Christ Himself as “lawless works.”

b) Course and Goal

It is apparent that two things have paved the way for the swift, widespread acceptance of signs, wonders, and miracles within Christendom during the closing days of the present dispensation:

1) *The deadness of the mainline Churches* (note the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:14-21, depicting the Church as it will exist immediately prior to Christ’s return: “...thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”).

2) *The Biblical ignorance of Christians in these Churches* (a condition produced by the failure of pastor-teachers, over the years, to fulfill their calling). And Christians in Churches of this nature, *NOT knowing the Word of God, are ripe for deception.*

Those exhibiting and advocating miraculous works appeal to Christians across all denominational lines through presenting what appears to be *a living, active, vibrant experience to replace the deadness.* The matter is often promoted as “a renewal” *which the Lord is effecting among His people during the closing days of this dispensation; and literally millions of Christians have been caught up in this false ideology.*

The Church being “renewed” during the closing days of this dispensation is, of course, *NOT the Biblical picture at all.* Scripture presents the dispensation ending with *an apostate Church, NOT a renewed Church* (Rev. 3:14-21). “Renewal” would be reversing the leavening process in Matt. 13:33, or effecting a reversion of the tree back to a mustard bush in Matt. 13:31, 32.

Those within this movement though reinterpret these (and other) Scriptures to fit within the framework of their own ideology.

Thus, the movement’s leaders, through a misinterpretation of Scripture, are actually trying to carry matters in a direction

contrary to the way Scripture states things will go; and through this means *the Christians' attention is being drawn from the truth of Scripture into error promoted by the multitudes.*

A high premium within the movement is also placed on *experience* (in connection with miraculous works), with *a supposed closeness to God being derived through such experiences.* This alone should cause individuals to stop and think, for during millenniums of time, pagan religions, infiltrated by demons, have incorporated into their activities *experiences in connection with miraculous works of the same type which have been brought over into Christendom today.*

Within these pagan religions, demons work on human emotions through such things as dances or music, leading their votaries into dramatic, ecstatic experiences. Such experiences move one into feeling a closeness with Deity; and the more dramatic the experiences, the more in touch with God the person believes himself to be. *The goal is a feeling of euphoria within this state.*

In what direction is the present working of Satan, which will continue right on into the Tribulation after the Church is gone, actually moving? What is the goal, apart from a present deception of Christians, which will carry over into a deception of Israel during the Tribulation?

The answer, according to Scripture, is very simple: Satan's work is about to move *full circle.* Organized false religion had its beginning in Babylon during the days of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1ff), and it will have its end in Babylon during the days of Antichrist (Rev. 17:1ff). "Nimrod," *the first king of Babylon,* is a type of "Antichrist," *the last king of Babylon.*

These were and remain Satan's false systems, *demons exercise control, and supernatural powers are exhibited through men and women by these demons.* The entire system will reach its greatest height during the coming Tribulation, immediately prior to its destruction; and it will, at that time, once again be centered back in Babylon.

(Satan's present work in this respect appears to be centered in two realms:

- 1) Efforts to disrupt the Spirit's primary work during the present dispensation — *calling out a bride for God's Son.*

2) Efforts to prepare a fertile ground for conditions which will exist when the Tribulation begins, when he will launch his final and most intense onslaught against Israel.

Satan's revealed, ultimate goal is *the utter and complete destruction of the nation of Israel*, something which should come under serious consideration by Christians caught up in the working of Satan during the closing days of the present dispensation.

Needless to say, *God does not take kindly to ill-treatment extended to His Sons, whether His firstborn son Jesus or His firstborn Son Israel.*)

Deception During the Tribulation

The ones manifesting signs, wonders, and miracles in Christendom today are not, by large, the unsaved, *but Christians themselves*. That is, *Satan has deceived multitudes of Christians, who are, in turn, deceiving other Christians* (note once again the manner in which the question is asked in Matt. 7:22).

And such deception will apparently be wrought after the same fashion during the coming Tribulation. It will not be Gentiles going to Israel as "false Christs, and false prophets," but mainly, if not completely, *apostate Jews going to Israel after this fashion*.

Note that Antichrist will have a False Prophet, who will evidently be *a Jew*. This man will arise from *the land* (the land of Israel), while the Antichrist will arise from *the sea* (a Gentile land [Rev. 13:1, 11]).

And deception of the Jewish people during the Tribulation will be effected mainly through this man, who, through his deceptive ways, will evidently pave the way for numerous "false Christs, and false prophets" to arise in the midst of the Jewish people.

("Earth" in Rev. 13:11 is a translation of the word *ge* in the Greek text, which can be understood and translated as either "earth" or "land." *Context* is the determining factor concerning how this word is to be understood and translated.

The references to both "sea" and "earth ['land']" in vv. 1, 11 are references to *location*. The "sea" is a reference to *the Gentile nations*, and the Greek word *ge* can only be understood in the same sense, referring to other than the Gentile nations, to *the land of Israel* [the only place on

earth separate from the sea; if the word *ge* is understood and translated “earth” in v. 11, that would include the sea, which would not make sense contextually.]

Deception, according to Matt. 24:26, will involve *false reports* concerning the appearance of Israel’s Messiah. The Jewish people will be given hope where there is no hope. They will be told that their Messiah, the One Who can effect deliverance, is in a certain place (the “desert,” the “secret chambers”). And the warning to Israel in this passage is to beware of anyone who comes with this type message, for Messiah’s return will not be in this manner at all.

Rather, *the return of Israel’s Messiah will be sudden; it will be clearly visible for all to behold; it will result in deliverance for Israel; and it will be followed by destruction for Israel’s enemies* (Matt. 24:27-31; cf. Isa. 27:13; Ezek. 38:1ff, 39:1ff; Joel 2:1ff; 3:1ff).

Thus, *false reports* by “false Christs, and false prophets,” who manifest “great signs and wonders,” will form a major part of Satan’s overall, final plan to destroy Israel during the Great Tribulation. Satan will *know* that his time is short; he will *know* that exactly three and one-half years will transpire from the time Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel until the time Christ returns. And during this relatively brief period *he will hold NOTHING back as he zeroes in on his primary target — the nation of Israel.*

Concluding Remarks:

Within the confines of the lukewarm Laodicean Church during the closing days of the present dispensation, *Christians have only one recourse to avoid being engulfed, after some fashion, in the final stages of the working of the leaven — a knowledge of the Word of God. No substitute or alternate exists.*

The same one recourse will also be available for Israel during the Great Tribulation. NOT ONLY has Israel been warned concerning the time and manner of the appearance of false Christs and false prophets BUT Israel has also been given information concerning the time and manner of the appearance of the true Messiah. And God will have His witnesses on earth during that coming day to bear a true testimony to Israel concerning these things (Rev. 11:3ff).

7

THE LORD'S RETURN

To Bring About the End Seen from the Beginning

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:27-31).

In verses twenty-seven through thirty-one, the Jewish section of the Olivet discourse deals with Christ's return and attendant events. Christ will return *immediately after the Great Tribulation*; and His return will be accompanied by a *great shaking and decimation of governmental powers on earth*, depicted in verse twenty-nine by a darkening of the sun and moon (signifying the main governing powers) and the stars falling from heaven (signifying lesser governmental powers).

And this great shaking of governmental powers will occur in connection with “the sign of the Son of man in heaven,” when He appears “with his mighty angels” in “power and great glory” (cf. Joel 2:1, 10; 3:15, 16; Hag. 2:21, 22; Matt. 24:3, 29, 30; Luke 21:7, 25, 26; II Thess. 1:7; Heb. 12:26; Rev. 7:12-17).

(For additional information on the symbolism used in verse twenty-nine — a *shaking* of “the powers of the heavens,” referring to a *decimation of Gentile powers on earth at the end of the Tribulation* — refer to Chapter XV, “The Great Seismos,” in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.

Also see Chapter II in this book.)

Christ’s return will occur at the full end of the “seventy weeks” *determined* upon the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24). This is a four-hundred-ninety-year period of time, and the Great Tribulation will constitute the concluding three and one-half years of this time, concluding the Jewish dispensation during Man’s Day and bringing an end to Man’s 6,000-year Day.

Antichrist will rule the earth during these climactic three and one-half years, and a time of such *unparalleled trouble* will exist within his kingdom at the end of this time that the Lord will have to *shorten those days* in order to prevent the very destruction of mankind itself (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Christ’s return will, thus, be at a time when chaotic conditions of this nature exist (vv. 29, 30).

Manner, Time of His Return

False Christs and false prophets appearing to Israel during the reign of Antichrist will seek, through a manifestation of “great signs and wonders,” to mislead the people of God concerning the appearance of their Messiah. They will proclaim such things as, “Behold, he is in the desert,” or “Behold, he is in the secret chambers” (vv. 23-26).

These false messages will be proclaimed during the darkest hour of Israeli history; and these messages will form part of Satan’s strategy as he, through the man of sin, seeks to destroy the nation of Israel during this time (*cf.* II Thess. 2:9).

The manner of Christ’s return though is revealed to be just the opposite of that which will be proclaimed by the false Christs and false prophets. Christ is not going to return in some secret manner or to some secret out of the way place. He is going to return in *an open, visible manner for all to behold*:

"Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

To show a contrast between that which is false and that which is true surrounding His return, Christ, in verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight, called attention to two things:

- 1) His return will be *as the lightning which appears in the east and shines unto the west.*
- 2) His return will be *as the eagles being attracted to the carcass of a slain animal or an individual.*

Both of these together show *the time, the suddenness, the openness, and that which will occur at the time of His return.*

1) As the Lightning

Lightning appears *suddenly and flashes across the sky for all to behold.* Apart from atmospheric conditions being conducive, there is no forewarning for lightning.

And Christ chose this natural phenomenon to describe the nature of His return. When conditions are as foretold — *as the days of Noah and as the days of Lot* (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30) — Christ, as is the manner with lightning, *will appear without warning.* His appearance *will be sudden, it will be open, and it will be clearly visible for all to see.*

Christ's return is not likened to lightning which flashes across just any part of the sky, but it is likened to lightning *seen in the east which flashes into the western part of the sky.*

The significance of this is seen in the movement of storm systems. Aside from that part of the earth near the equator and the poles, storm systems track *from west to east* (this movement is reversed near the equator and the poles, which is why hurricanes, which form in the equatorial zone, move *from east to west* and then tend to slowly swing around and veer in *a more easterly direction* once they begin moving north into latitudes out of the equatorial zone).

The Middle East though, where Scripture was written, lies between the equatorial and polar zones, and *the west to east* movement of storm systems would be in view; and lightning flashing

from east to west, as in the text, *MUST* be understood in the light of the movement of storm systems in that part of the world.

Lightning seen *in the west would signal an approaching storm*. From the vantage point of the observer, the time element involved would be *preceding the storm*. The opposite though would be true concerning lightning seen *in the east*. *The storm would be moving away*; and from the vantage point of the observer, the time element would be *following the storm*.

Christ will return "*immediately after the tribulation of those days...*" He will appear *suddenly*, and He will appear *immediately after the storm*, as *lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west."*

And the thought of *deliverance for Israel*, for the nation's sake, would be in view.

For the Gentile nations though, *the storm will NOT be over at this point in time*. Rather, the storm will still be raging, about to reach its most intense stage — "the great day of His wrath" (Rev. 6:17). And the storm for the nations *will continue UNTIL Christ treads the winepress at what is often called the battle of Armageddon*.

2) *The Eagles and the Carcass*

Matt. 24:28, associating Christ's return with eagles hovering over a carcass, is often interpreted as a reference to *the battle of Armageddon* following Christ's return (*cf.* Rev. 19:17-21).

It is true that the end result of that which is referred to in this verse has to do with this battle, *BUT* the contextual setting has to do with *the manner of Christ's return* rather than with *Christ subsequently treading the winepress*.

Christ's return being likened to eagles hovering over a carcass, as the previous reference to lightning, also has to do with the fact that Christ is not going to return back to this earth and appear in some out of the way place (*e.g.*, as mentioned in the text, "desert," or "secret chambers").

Rather, He is going to *return and appear openly* among those who are corrupting the earth, with a view to bringing such corruption to an end. As the eagles devour a corrupting carcass, so will the Lord do away with corruption in that day (*cf.* Ps. 18:8).

Christ's return being likened to eagles hovering over a carcass is simply another way of saying the same thing, by way of introduction, to that seen in the next verse, in verse twenty-nine — the decimation and destruction of Gentile world power, depicted in verse twenty-eight as *the corrupting force on earth which MUST be done away with*.

Corruption in the kingdom of Antichrist at the time of the Lord's return will be centered in Babylon, and an end to this corruption will be effected through *the Stone smiting the image*, as revealed in Dan. 2:34, 35, 40-45.

This foreshadows Christ (depicted by the Stone) *suddenly* appearing and destroying the final form of the kingdom of Babylon under Antichrist (depicted by the final form of the image).

Note that Christ will destroy Gentile world power by striking the image at its feet, showing that the final form of the image (the final form of Gentile world power, centered in Babylon) will then be in existence; but it *will NOT* be the feet, part of iron and part of clay, *ALONE* which will be destroyed in that day.

The Stone, "cut out of the mountain without hands," through striking the image at its feet, *will break the complete image into pieces*; for "the iron [the legs, and a part of the feet], the clay [the other part of the feet], the brass [the belly and thighs], the silver [the breast and arms], and the gold [the head]" *will all be "broken to pieces together"* — *broken into such fine pieces that the wind is seen carrying the remains of the complete image away like chaff* (pointing to both *the full end and the ultimate worth of Gentile world power* [Dan. 2:35, 45]).

Thus, the final form of the image is seen incorporating *ALL that previously existed in the Babylonian kingdom*, dating all the way back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar (that part of the kingdom depicted by *the head of gold*); and the destruction of Babylon in its final form is seen as *a destruction of NOT ONLY that which will then exist BUT also ALL which had previously existed* — *that depicted by the entire image, from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay*.

The image covers *the entire Times of the Gentiles* — from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay. This period *began* about 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first came against Jerusalem and began to carry away Jewish captives into Babylon.

Then, *the first major change* in the governmental administration in Babylon during the Times of the Gentiles occurred when the Medes and the Persians came against Babylon and *conquered the city* in 536 B.C.

The next major change occurred when the Grecians under Alexander the Great came against Babylon and *conquered the city* in 330 B.C.

And *the next major change*, as it pertains to Babylon, is yet future and will occur *after Antichrist establishes his headquarters in Babylon. This time though Babylon will NOT be conquered; rather, this time Babylon will be destroyed in a sudden and complete manner, NEVER to rise again.*

Note that *Babylon has never been destroyed during the Times of the Gentiles.* It has been conquered several times, and it simply faded from view as a world power after its four-way division among four of Alexander the Great's generals following his death in 323 B.C.

Its destruction, as prophesied numerous places in Scripture, awaits *the final form of the image — the final form of the Babylonian kingdom, which will exist during the reign of Antichrist.* It will be during this man's reign that *the complete image* will be destroyed, *in complete accord* with references such as Isa. 13:19, 20; Jer. 50:39, 40; 51:7-9, 37, 58-64.

(A destruction of the complete image in its final form is necessary for the simple reason that *NO destruction of any part of the image has ever occurred in history.*

Thus, NOTHING short of a destruction of the complete image will suffice; NOTHING associated with Gentile world power — from beginning to end — can remain and co-exist with the kingdom of Christ.)

Yet Once More

"Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. 12:26; cf. Hag. 2:5-7, 21, 22).

Numerous metaphors and various types of symbolic language are used throughout Scripture in the whole overall thought surrounding that depicted by the eagles being gathered in connec-

tion with *a carcass, or the sun and moon being darkened, the stars falling from heaven*, and “the powers of the heavens being shaken” in Matt. 24:28, 29. This is presented more than one way in the Olivet Discourse and in numerous related ways in other parts of Scripture elsewhere.

For example, note several sections of Scripture from the Books of Isaiah and Joel:

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine...

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord, and in the day of his fierce anger” (Isa. 13:9, 10, 13).

“The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the hosts of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth” (Isa. 24:19-21).

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness...

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 2:1, 2a; 3:14-16).

Events surrounding Christ's return, both immediately before and immediately following His return, are depicted by a darkening of the sun and moon, with the stars withdrawing their shining and falling from heaven (together depicting the decimation and destruction of Gentile world power).

And the whole of the matter subsequently being brought to a grand climax is described through an additional means, by "a great earthquake ['a great shaking'], such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake ['so mighty a shaking'], and so great" (Rev. 16:17-19).

To further describe this time, there will be such turmoil within the government of the earth in that day that "men's hearts" *will be failing* "them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (cf. Ps. 18:7, 8; Isa. 2:17-21; Matt. 24:28, 29; Luke 21:25, 26; Rev. 16:10).

Then, to even further describe this time, the "cities of the nations" *are seen falling*, with "every mountain and island...moved out of their places" (depicting the finality of the matter at the time Gentile world power is destroyed, *at the time the Stone smites the image at the feet, with the image completely destroyed and the wind carrying it away as chaff* [Rev. 6:14; 16:18, 19]).

(Note that *a shaking of Gentile world power* is in view in sections of Scripture such as Matt. 24:7, 29; Mark 13:8, 24, 25; Luke 21:11, 26; Rev. 6:12-14; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18-20, *NOT earthquakes*. The Greek word *seismos* ['shaking'] is used in all of these passages, referring mainly to *a shaking of heavenly bodies* [the sun, moon, and stars] — "the powers of the heavens" [cf. Dan. 4:26].

Refer to information at the top of page 92 in this chapter.)

Darkness, Light in Egypt

Drawing from the type in the Book of Exodus — Moses returning to the Jewish people in Egypt, followed by subsequent events surrounding both the Jewish people and the kingdom of the Assyrian of that day — numerous things can be seen regarding Christ's future return to the Jewish people, followed by subsequent events surrounding both the Jewish people and the kingdom of

the Assyrian in that coming day.

Darkness covered the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt immediately preceding the death of the firstborn (Ex. 10:21-23; 11:1ff), foreshadowing the darkness which will cover the kingdom of the Assyrian immediately preceding the death of the firstborn yet future (Rev. 16:10-17; *ref. "Anti-Semitism," Appendix I*).

(In the account from Exodus, Paschal lambs died in the stead of the firstborn in every family throughout the nation; and, in an equal respect, the Jewish people forming the nation, through slaying the Paschal lambs and applying the blood, could ONLY have given rise to a lamb dying for the entire nation, for God's firstborn son, with the blood properly applied in both individual and national respects.

In the account yet future, the Paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God, has died in the stead of the firstborn, which would include not only every single Israelite but the nation as a whole, God's firstborn son. Israel slew the Lamb almost 2,000 years ago, but the Jewish people, comprising the nation, have yet to apply the blood.)

The darkness which the Lord brought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt is described in Scripture as a "thick darkness [dense, deep darkness]" of such a nature, apparently so completely void of light, that *it could actually be felt* (Ex. 10:21, 22). And it will be *NO different* in the future kingdom of the Assyrian.

Joel 2:2 and Zeph. 1:15 record the same words in the Hebrew text as used in Ex. 10:22 to describe the darkness during that coming day, associated with the destruction of the kingdom of the future Assyrian.

Also, when darkness covered the land in the past kingdom of the Assyrian, the children of Israel had "light" where they dwelled, pointing to conditions which will surround the nation of Israel in relation to the restoration of the nation which will be saved out of the Tribulation (both physically and spiritually) and the subsequent restoration of the theocracy.

The darkness wrought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt was connected with God's judgment upon this kingdom. The firstborn was about to die, NOT ONLY in an individual respect BUT in a national respect as well.

God recognized *Israel, NOT Egypt, as His firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23); and for Israel to realize the *rights* within this firstborn status, *the sceptre had to pass FROM Egypt TO Israel. Such necessitated the destruction of Egypt as a world power.*

And this destruction occurred in the Red Sea, following Israel's safe passage through the sea. Why could Israel pass safely through the Red Sea but not so with the military power of Egypt? The answer is simple. It had to do with the previous death of the firstborn, whether experienced vicariously or personally.

With the Israelites, it was the former (experiencing the death of the firstborn vicariously). The firstborn had died, and he was to be buried (in the sea, in the place of death). But once in the sea, death could not hold the Israelites, for the firstborn had already died, *both individually and nationally.*

Thus, the sea — the place of death — had NO power over the Jewish people, and they subsequently found themselves NOT ONLY out of the sea BUT out of Egypt, on the eastern banks of the sea.

BUT, for the Egyptians, it was the latter (experiencing the death of the firstborn personally). They *could NOT* safely pass through the sea, for, though the firstborn in the family had previously died, *there was NO vicarious death; there was NO individual or national vicarious death of the firstborn, as in Israel's case* (actually, in a national sense, there *COULDN'T* be a vicarious death for the firstborn, for *the nation of Egypt was NOT God's firstborn son*). *Thus, the sea — the place of death — had complete control over the Egyptians.*

They went down into the place of death and remained there, apart from any thought or hope of every rising out of this place.

And, *AS* it occurred in the type, *SO* will it occur in the antitype. *The type has been SET, and it CANNOT be broken.*

The destruction of the power of Egypt, foreshadows the destruction of Gentile world power yet future. After the kingdom of the Assyrian of that day had been shaken to its knees, *this kingdom was destroyed, NEVER to rise again.*

And thus will it be with Gentile world power yet future.

The Jewish people though, in the type, are seen standing triumphant, out of Egypt, on the eastern banks of the sea, with the land in the Abrahamic covenant and a theocracy lying before them.

And EXACTLY the same thing is seen in the antitype. The Jewish people, in that future day, will be removed from a worldwide dispersion and will, as it were, *stand triumphant on the eastern banks of the sea, with a restoration to the land in a restored theocracy lying before them.*

Darkness, Light in the World today

Darkness covered the entire land for the last three hours Christ hung on the Cross at Golgotha. Then, immediately after Christ died, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (Matt. 27:45-51).

God judged sin in the person of His Son at Golgotha during a time of *darkness*. He “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).

God’s Firstborn Son died in the antitype of all the Paschal lambs slain in Ex. 12:1ff, a substitutionary death to rectify the sin problem surrounding the firstborn in the human race.

The firstborn is under the sentence of death (Ex. 12:12; cf. Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27), but this death can now be realized through the One Who has died in man’s stead (Ex. 12:3-13, 21-23; cf. I Cor. 5:7).

And, through believing, Christ’s substitutionary death is reckoned to man’s account. The person becomes *a new creation* “in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17). God removes “the first, that he may establish the second” (Heb. 10:9).

Then, moving beyond the point of man’s salvation through faith in the One Who died in his stead, *it MUST be recognized that this salvation is for a purpose*; and that purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. Individuals are saved today with a view to their reigning as *co-regents* with Christ in His kingdom. God is taking an entire dispensation to call out the rulers for the coming age. He is presently extending to Christians an invitation to occupy positions of power and authority with His Son during the coming day when He reigns over the earth.

And the shaking of the material creation immediately after Christ died reflects on *the very reason He died* — to redeem that which Adam forfeited in the fall, which has to do with *man’s rule over the earth*. This shaking of the earth reflected on the same

thing as the shaking of the mount at Sinai during Moses' day (Ex. 19:18). The shaking in both instances looked out ahead to the great shaking and destruction of Gentile world power at the end of Man's Day, allowing God's firstborn Sons to realize the reason for man's creation in the beginning.

And, inseparably associated with the preceding, the graves of many Old Testament saints were opened at the time God shook the earth following the death of His Son, with these Old Testament saints being raised from the dead and coming out of their graves following Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27:52, 53).

(Note that the graves of these Old Testament saints *were opened to allow them to come out*, exactly as seen in the resurrection of Lazarus in John chapter eleven. This would indicate that they, exactly as Lazarus, came out of their graves *in natural bodies of flesh, blood, and bone*, both pointing to the future resurrection of Old Testament saints *in natural bodies at the end of the Tribulation, following the great seismos, the great shaking*.)

In contrast, note the resurrection of Christ, when *a great shaking occurred as well* [Matt. 28:1-6]. The stone was rolled away, but not to let Christ out. The stone was rolled away to let others in to see that He was already out. Death could not hold the One Who had previously said, "I am the resurrection, and the life" [John 11:25; cf. Acts 2:24].

Christ [as Christians one day will be as well] was raised in a different type body, referred to in I Cor. 15:44 as "a spiritual body" — *the same body of flesh and bone, but with the life-giving, animating principle being the Spirit, not the blood [the blood carries oxygen from the lungs throughout the cells of a natural body; the Spirit, the very Breath which produces and sustains spiritual life today, performs this function in the spiritual body]*. And, as well, the spiritual body has capabilities not seen in the natural body — *e.g., movement from place to place at will* [cf. Luke 24:13-15, 36-40; Acts 1:9; 9:3-5].)

The resurrection of individuals immediately after Christ was raised, *following a time of darkness and a shaking of the earth, can ONLY form a first fruit of the future resurrection of Old Testament saints*. This future resurrection, the main harvest, will also occur following *a time of darkness and a shaking of the material creation*, allowing God's firstborn son, Israel, to occupy the nation's proper place on the earth in the theocracy (Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:1, 2; cf. Ezek. 39:21-29).

Israel Regathered, Restored

Christ, at His first coming, appeared in two related fashions, seen in John 1:11:

“He came unto his own [neuter in the Greek text, referring to *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in the Greek text, referring to *His Own people, the people of Israel*] received him not.”

Christ, born “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2), came unto the things associated with His kingship, offered an heirship in these things to His Own people, the Jewish people; but they rejected both that which was offered and the One making the offer.

This resulted in Christ subsequently leaving the house of Israel *desolate* (Matt. 23:38), with a *further desolation* to be effected during the Tribulation by the one who will one day come “in his own name,” whom the Jewish people will receive (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43).

But the long night will not last forever. The time is coming when a new day will dawn, when “the Sun of righteousness” will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2).

In the day, when Messiah appears the second time to His Own things and His Own people — when the Jewish people “look upon” the One “whom they...pierced” — *there will be acceptance, NOT rejection*. A nation will be “born at once” (Isa. 66:8), and Christ will then send His angels forth (those accompanying Christ at the time of His return) with “a great sound of a trumpet,” and *they will regather the dispersed Jewish people back to the land*.

The Jewish people will be regathered “from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” God will regather them “from all the nations” where they have been scattered (Deut. 30:1-3). He will send forth His angels who will be “fishers” and “hunters” in that day; and “they shall fish for them...and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks” (Jer. 16:14-16).

And if any Israelites have been driven out even into “the outmost parts of heaven” (an all-encompassing statement, as in Rev. 5:3 — “in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth”), the angels of God will find them (Deut. 30:4).

Before the Jewish people enter the land though, God is going to deal with them in judgment; and He is going to make a new covenant with the nation (Ezek. 20:33-38; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13). This judgment and the ratifying of this covenant will possibly occur in the wilderness of Sinai, the same place that the old covenant was made with Israel.

And the new covenant will be established with the people of Israel for *the same purpose that the old covenant was established — rules and regulations governing the people of God within the theocracy* (Ex. 19:5, 6). God will make a new covenant with His people in view of *the theocracy being restored to the nation*.

The nation of Israel is to be placed in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob under a new covenant within a restored theocracy. And, dwelling in the land in this position, Israel is to realize the rights of primogeniture.

God's firstborn son will then be the ruling nation on earth and will be the channel through which all the Gentile nations will be reached with God's message and be blessed. *NOTHING short of this will satisfy the requirements of Scripture concerning Israel's national future and the national future of the surrounding Gentile nations.*

Concluding Remarks:

Events on this earth are about to move full circle. The story of the Israelites in the brickyards of Egypt under bondage to an Assyrian ruler during the days of Moses is about to be repeated. The wrath of the Assyrian in the latter days though will be *FAR, FAR worse* than during Moses' day (Matt. 24:21, 22), for Satan will know that his time is rapidly running out.

God called Israel into existence for definite, specific purposes; and these purposes *MUST be realized*.

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [without a change of mind]" (Rom. 11:29).

God is NOT going to change His mind concerning the reason He called Israel into existence. God, in that coming day, will deliver Israel from the hand of the Assyrian; and He will then establish Israel in her rightful place with respect to the nation's calling.

8

THE FIG TREE

The Entire Nation, in or out of the Land

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [He] is near, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. 24:32-36).

The Jewish section of the Olivet discourse begins with *Israel in the Tribulation* and involves God’s terminal dealings surrounding Israel during Man’s Day, with everything moving toward *Israel being restored to her rightful place in relation to the theocracy and the surrounding Gentile nations*.

Then, the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse closes with the parable of the fig tree and a reference to the days of Noah, *both referring to events pertaining to Israel during the Tribulation*.

And though both are dealing with Israel, matters are approached after a different fashion than seen in the preceding verses. But, as in the preceding verses, *the direction toward which everything moves is the same*.

There is a common but false interpretation of the Olivet Discourse which attempts to place the occurrence of some events depicted in the Jewish section of this discourse during the present dispensation, preceding that time when God removes the Church and once again begins to deal with Israel, completing the last seven years of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy.

This, as seen in previous chapters in this book (particularly in Chapter I), is a mistake in hermeneutics. This type understanding and interpretation of the passage seeks to present a beginning of God's national dealings with Israel at a time near the end of the present dispensation, while God is dealing with the Church, during the time when Israel has been set aside, allowing the Spirit of God to call out a bride for God's Son.

God works with *SET times which He Himself has established*. And seeing God dealing with Israel on a national basis near the end of the present dispensation, before the dispensation has run its course, is *to see God begin dealing with Israel before the arrival of the time which He had previously established and set aside*.

God is *NOT* going to begin dealing with Israel *UNTIL it is time for Him to begin dealing with Israel*. And the time in which He will resume His dealings with Israel is clearly revealed in Scripture.

God's concluding dealings with Israel during the present age, ending Man's Day, *await time during the Seventieth and last Week of Daniel's prophecy — which CANNOT be brought to pass UNTIL the present dispensation has run its course*.

(Some Bible students might seek to see a validity for God beginning His dealing with Israel in a national respect, as seen in the Olivet Discourse, before the present dispensation is over, on the basis of the fact that He continued dealing with Israel in a similar respect for some three decades after the dispensation began [from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.].

One problem with this type thinking has to do with the situation, then and now; the situation between 33 A.D. and 62 A.D. was not the same at all as the situation is now.

In 33 A.D., after the kingdom had been taken from Israel and a new creation had been called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, *a generation of saved Jews remained on the scene*.

This was the generation to which the kingdom had originally been offered during Christ's earthly ministry; and the kingdom was re-offered *to this generation of saved Jews* for about the next three decades, until this generation began to die off, leaving *a generation of unsaved Jews* on the scene [for now salvation was effected through *the death and shed blood of the rejected Paschal Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, not through the death and shed blood of the previously accepted paschal lambs, which had typified and*

pointed forward to Christ [or reflected back upon Christ (Rev. 13:8)]. Thus, the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, of necessity, was closed.

During the period from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D., this message, as seen in Rom. 1:16, was “to the Jew first [those comprising *this saved generation of Jews*], and also to the Greek [those comprising *the one new man, the new creation ‘in Christ,’* which was taken mainly from the Gentiles].” Israel was given priority during this time simply *because of the nation’s identity within God’s economy* [which had allowed both the original offer and the re-offer to be extended].

A situation of any related nature to the preceding simply won’t exist near or at the end of the present dispensation. Aside from that, *the main problem* surrounding the thought of God dealing with Israel on a national basis near the end of the present dispensation, in a similar nature to the way He dealt with Israel for about three decades at the beginning of the dispensation, would be *the clear teaching of Scripture itself*. Scripture is quite clear concerning *the time* in which God will turn back to Israel and begin dealing with this nation once again.

God’s national dealings with Israel will occur *ONLY AFTER the present dispensation is over, AFTER He completes His dealings with the Church, and AFTER time during Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy begins*. This is the manner in which God has established the matter throughout the Prophets and at any other place where Scripture deals with that future time when God will resume His national dealings with Israel.

Just as surely as God will complete His dealings with and remove the Church *before the Tribulation begins* [which will comprise the last seven years of the previous dispensation, the dispensation in which God dealt with Israel], *He will NOT begin His dealings with Israel on a national basis UNTIL He has completed His work with the Church during the present dispensation*.

To see God dealing with Israel in a national respect before He completes His work with the Church during the present dispensation [any part of the nation — *e.g.*, the remnant in the land today, forming the nation of Israel], or to see God dealing with the Church during the Tribulation [any part of the Church], is a mistake in Biblical hermeneutics.

The hermeneutical mistake is made through stepping outside the scope of the meaning of the word “dispensation” in Scripture.

This word, a translation from the Greek word, *oikonomia* [a compound word which has to do with *the management of household affairs* (*oikos*, ‘house,’ and *nemo*, ‘to manage’)]. “A dispensation,” by the simple

definition of the word itself, has to do with *God's management and dealings with household servants* [a work occurring during *time*, though *time* is not part of the meaning of the word, *oikonomia*, "dispensation"].

During the present time, God is dealing with one group of household servants, *the Church*. *Israel*, comprising another group of household servants, has been set aside, allowing God to deal with a different group of household servants for the length of time covered by the present dispensation. And once God has completed His dealings with one group of household servants during the present dispensation, He will then turn back to *Israel* and deal with another group of household servants, completing the last seven years of the past dispensation.

But God *will NOT* deal with both during either the closing days of the present dispensation or during the last seven years of the past dispensation [Daniel's Seventieth Week, the Tribulation].

That is to say, God *will NOT* deal with *Israel* in a national respect during the closing days of the present dispensation, during which time He is dealing with the Church; *NOR* will God deal with the Church during the coming Tribulation, during which time He will be dealing with *Israel*.

Thus, any thought of Christians [any Christians, faithful or unfaithful] entering into any part of the Tribulation [a widespread teaching in Christendom today] is immediately seen to be fallacious on dispensational grounds alone.

And, aside from the previous, when dealing with that which the future holds for Christians at the end of the present dispensation, Scripture always clearly presents Christians [all Christians] being removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.)

Thoughts that part of the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse has a beginning fulfillment during the closing days of the present dispensation concern mainly the opening verses (all or part of the events seen in vv. 4-14, depending on the interpreter).

Then, this whole overall thought of a beginning fulfillment occurring during the closing days of the present dispensation is usually carried over into the parable of the fig tree in verses thirty-two through thirty-six by these same interpreters.

An attempt is made to relate the budding of the fig tree to *Israel* becoming a recognized nation once again on May 14, 1948, with many Bible students seeing this as the beginning of God's promised restoration of His people from a worldwide dispersion.

This may sound good, and it may appear to be in complete accord with that seen in the Olivet Discourse, along with Biblical prophecy surrounding God's promises concerning the restoration of His people. *BUT*, this type understanding of the matter is *NOT ONLY* incorrect any way that it is viewed *BUT* such an understanding of the parable of the fig tree and God's promises concerning Israel's restoration only adds to an already existing confusion concerning Biblical prophecy as it pertains to Israel and the nations.

(For additional information concerning why the present restoration of a remnant to the land during modern times [though about 6,000,000 strong, some two-fifths of the world's Jewish population] can be *NEITHER* a beginning *NOR* a partial fulfillment of God's many restoration promises to Israel throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, refer to the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again.*)

The Fig Tree — a Metaphor

"Trees" are used in Scripture to symbolize *national powers*.

In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, "trees" are seen as representative of *nations* which sought to elect a king to reign over them. Daniel 4:10-12 refers to the vision of "a tree in the midst of the earth," which is revealed to represent *the kingdom of Babylon* (vv. 20-22).

And the Lord used trees on more than one occasion during His earthly ministry within this same framework in order to teach His disciples great spiritual truths concerning the Church, Israel, and the Gentile nations.

He referred to the "mustard seed" which germinated, experienced an unnatural growth, and became *a tree*. He later referred to "the fig tree" on several occasions, and on one of these occasions He referred to "all the trees" in conjunction with *the fig tree* (Matt. 13:31, 32; 21:19, 20; 24:32; Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21; 13:28; Luke 13:6-9; 21:29).

The manner in which the Lord used "the fig tree" in Matt. 21:19, 20 and Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21 (see also Luke 13:6-9) clearly reveals that He was referring to *Israel*. Contextually, even apart from an understanding of how God had previously used "the fig

tree” in the Old Testament Scriptures as a reference to *Israel*, no other conclusion can be drawn.

And His subsequent use of “the fig tree” in the Olivet Discourse accounts *MUST* be understood in this same sense, for “the fig tree” *had NOT ONLY* previously been singled out to represent *Israel* (in line with the fact that “trees” are used in Scripture to represent *nations*) *BUT* the textual setting and things stated about “the fig tree” in the Olivet Discourse accounts preclude any other interpretation.

In this same light, “all the trees” in Luke 21:29 would have to be a reference to *ALL the Gentile nations*.

Though there are several references in the Old Testament to the use of “the fig tree” to represent *Israel* (e.g., Hosea 9:10; Micah 4:4; Hab. 3:17), the Book of Joel contains the most extensive use, clearly and unmistakably associating “the fig tree” with *Israel*.

This book deals with the complete Times of the Gentiles (ch. 1), but more extensively with the Times of the Gentiles being brought to an end, followed by *Israel* (“the fig tree” [1:7, 12; 2:22]) occupying her proper place in relation to the nations (“all the trees of the field” [1:12]) in a restored theocracy.

The Book of Joel contains an abundance of metaphors and symbolism. And this type use of language *MUST* be recognized when studying through the book.

In fact, God, throughout His Word, has an affinity for the use of this type language, a type language used more commonly in the East (where Scripture was written) than in the West.

The book begins by calling attention to four types of locusts — together, showing *the complete destructive power of the locust* — which are used to symbolize *the complete destructive power of a Gentile nation* (in this case, the kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar), which, itself, is symbolized by *the destruction which a lion with its powerful teeth and jaws can produce* (1:4-6).

In the preceding respect, the writer uses two metaphors (the destructive powers of both *the locust and the lion* [vv. 4, 6]) to describe the same thing, that seen in the next verse, in verse seven — the destruction which the Lord allowed *a Gentile nation* to wreak upon the nation of *Israel*:

“He [the Gentile nation (v. 6)] hath laid my vine waste, and barked [‘fragmented,’ ‘broken’] my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white [the bark missing from the branches, descriptive of the chewing work of locusts].”

Not only is reference made to “my fig tree,” but a previous, introductory reference is made to “my vine.” This is the translation of a Hebrew parallelism, something seen quite often in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. That is to say, a statement is made, then the same statement is repeated another way.

“My vine” is mentioned first. The vine had been laid waste by the destructive power of the Gentile nation referred to in the previous verse, and there can be no possible mistake concerning the identity of the nation referenced by “my vine” and that which is referred to by this sequence of events through the use of metaphors and symbolism.

The entire picture was presented earlier in Isa. 5:1-13, preceding both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (occurring about 722 and 605 B.C. respectively), with “the vineyard of the Lord of hosts” specifically said to be *the house of Israel, and the men of Judah* (a reference to both the northern and southern kingdoms in this case — *the whole house of Israel* [v. 7]).

And, in the same passage, because of the nation’s failure to bring forth the type fruit which the vineyard was supposed to produce, the Lord not only took away His protection, but He allowed Gentile nations to come into the land and take His people captive.

Then to further explain “my vine [*i.e., the whole house of Israel*]” being *laid waste in this manner* in Joel 1:4-7a, the writer goes on to refer to *EXACTLY the same thing* under the symbolism of “my fig tree,” completing the Hebrew parallelism (v. 7b).

Further down in the chapter (v. 12), there is a reference to “the vine” and “the fig tree” again, followed by a reference to “all the trees of the field” (a reference to the surrounding nations — the same nations seen through the symbolic use of “all the trees” in Luke 21:29, 30). And, in this verse, because of that which happened to the fig tree, to Israel, the surrounding nations are seen suffering a *similar fate*.

(In relation to the surrounding Gentile nations, Israel had been called into existence as the nation through which God would *NOT ONLY* reach the Gentile nations with His message *BUT* the nation through which He would bless the Gentile nations as well.

BUT, with Israel removed from the position which the nation had been called to occupy, *the Gentile nations, from a spiritual standpoint, could rise no higher than Israel. The nations, from a spiritual standpoint, could ONLY occupy a position in keeping with the position in which God had placed Israel.*)

But Joel doesn't end his prophecy at this point. Rather, the main part of the prophecy has to do with that coming day when God will restore His vine, His fig tree. And, with the restoration of the fig tree, the trees in the field would be dealt with accordingly, through Israel fulfilling her calling, reaching the nations with God's message and the nations being blessed through Israel (something seen also in Luke 21:29, 30, *when NOT ONLY the fig tree shoots forth BUT ALL the trees as well, verses which MUST be studied and understood in the light of Joel's prophecy*).

(As "all the trees," from a spiritual standpoint, *could NOT* occupy a position above the broken, fragmented position occupied by "the fig tree," the opposite concerning "all the trees" would be true when "the fig tree" is one day allowed to *shoot forth*.)

WHEN this occurs, *THEN* "all the trees" *can shoot forth*. *THEN*, *ALL* the Gentile nations can be reached by and blessed through Israel.)

Note how this condition relative to "the vine" and "the fig tree" — which, collectively, will result in blessings for "all the trees," seen in Luke 21:29, 30 — is dealt with in Joel once the Lord steps back into the picture and completes His dealings with Israel, with the Messianic Era in view:

"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength...

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:21, 22, 27).

The Fig Tree — Cursed

Christ, at His first coming, appeared in two related fashions, seen in John 1:11:

“He came unto his own [neuter in the Greek text, referring to *His Own things*], and his own [masculine in the Greek text, referring to *His Own people, the people of Israel*] received him not.”

His Own things to which He came had to do with those things rightfully belonging to the One “born King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2): the throne of David, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc. He offered that which pertained to *His Own things to His Own people* (the nation of Israel), and He was rejected.

As a consequence, Israel was, in turn, rejected. God set Israel aside while He called out a separate and distinct “nation,” comprised of those who were neither Jew nor Gentile, to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.

Matt. 21:1-11 records the account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as Israel’s King in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9. This was the final, climactic offer of *His Own things to His Own people*. And the continued rejection by the “chief priests and scribes” (v. 15) brought about the cursing of the fig tree (vv. 18, 19), the utterance of two parables pertaining to Israel and their unbelief (vv. 28-42), and the announcement that the kingdom which had been offered to and rejected by the Jewish people would be taken from them and given to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (v. 43).

Note the place which the cursing of the fig tree occupies in this sequence of events. It appears *immediately after* Christ’s final, climactic rejection by Israel and *immediately before* Christ announced that the “kingdom of God [*i.e.*, that part of the kingdom which had been offered to the nation — ‘the kingdom of the heavens’]” would be taken from Israel.

Understood contextually, the symbolism involved in the cursing of the fig tree becomes a relatively simple matter to ascertain. Christ came to the fig tree seeking fruit and found none (*EXACTLY* as seen when God came to His vineyard in Isa. 5:1-7 and found no fruit, a section of Scripture alluded to in Matt. 21:33ff which

related to Israel's fruitless condition at Christ's first coming).

A curse was then pronounced upon the tree (in relation to the tree bearing fruit):

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever [*lit.*, 'henceforward with respect to the age,' referring to the coming age, the Messianic Era]. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21:18, 19).

(Note that this curse relative to the nation bearing fruit was in relation to the proffered kingdom, *the kingdom of the heavens*. In relation to the rejected kingdom in Matt. 21:18, 19, Christ's previous words in Matt. 12:31, 32 would, of necessity, have to apply.

In these verses, "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [attributing to Satan the power through which Christ was performing miraculous signs]" *would NOT* be forgiven Israel's religious leaders [something seen extending to the nation at large in subsequent verses and the next chapter] "neither in this world, neither in the world to come [*lit.*, 'neither in this age (Man's 6,000-year Day), nor in the one about to come (the age about to come, the Lord's Day, the 1,000-year Messianic Era)]."

The same thing is in view relative to fruit bearing in Matt. 21:18, 19. Fruit bearing in these verses has to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*. And "the fig tree," *Israel*, will *NOT* bear fruit relative to this facet of the kingdom even during the Messianic Era — during the same time seen in Matt. 12:32, which covers *NOT* just Man's Day *BUT* the future Lord's Day as well.

In that future day though Israel will bear fruit. In fact, Israel will be very fruitful in that day, *just not in relation to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.*)

Christ came to Israel seeking fruit, found *NONE*, and Israel was set aside for a dispensation. "The fig tree," *Israel*, is to bear *NO* fruit during the present dispensation; *NOR* is Israel to bear fruit during the last seven years of the past dispensation — during the coming Tribulation, when *time* during the seven concluding years of this past dispensation will be fulfilled.

Israel is presently under a curse in this respect and will remain

in this status (relative to fruit bearing) until the Messianic Era.

But even during the Messianic Era, Israel's fruit bearing will be limited to the earthly sphere of the kingdom.

And in this respect, *AFTER* Israel has been restored, fruit will appear on the tree. In fact, restored *Israel will be VERY fruitful* (note *Sarah*, who was barren [Gen. 23:1, 2], and *Keturah*, who was very fruitful [Gen. 25:1, 2], within the overall framework of the typological teachings drawn from Gen. 21-25).

(For information on the typological teachings drawn from Gen. 21-25, refer to the author's book, *Search for the Bride*. This book has to do mainly with events in ch. 24 but covers the overall scope of events in chs. 21-25.)

The fig tree which Christ cursed had *leaves ONLY*. Mark, in his account, adds a statement not found in Matthew's gospel: "... for the time of figs was not yet" (Mark 11:13). It was not time for fruit to appear on either the tree which Christ cursed or the nation which the tree represented. It was too early in the season for the fig tree to bear fruit (although "leaves" portended *fruit*, for the appearance of fruit normally preceded or accompanied the appearance of leaves — a peculiarity of the fig tree); and, in this same respect, it was too early in God's septenary arrangement of time for Israel to bear fruit, though the nation will one day bear fruit.

The Fig Tree — Tender Branch, Leaves

Though the fig tree is cursed for the duration of the present dispensation, the tree, near the end of the age, is to reappear as it was seen in Matt. 21:19 prior to being cursed — *with leaves, but NO fruit*.

This will occur prior to the time that the curse is lifted, the Glory is restored, and fruit correspondingly appears on the tree. *The reappearance of the fig tree, possessing leaves ONLY, is THE SIGN which Scripture provides to show that the end of the age is very near.*

This is something though which will occur ONLY AFTER God resumes His national dealings with Israel — during the Tribulation — NOT something occurring near the end of the present dispensation.

Accordingly, the fig tree reappearing with leaves only has NOTHING

to do with the present existence of a Jewish nation in the Middle East, during the closing days of the present dispensation.

And this same thing would be true EVEN during the Tribulation, when God will have resumed His national dealings with Israel and the fig tree is seen with leaves once again.

It's *NOT* just the Jews comprising the nation in the Middle East which are in view. Rather, *THE WHOLE* of world Jewry is in view, with most of the Jews still scattered among the nations — *the same ones in view when the fig tree was cursed*, which can't possibly be limited to Jews in the land of Israel almost 2,000 years ago.

The Jews in the land today — comprising the present nation of Israel, as it is recognized by other nations — are there in *unbelief*. And it is this present nation which will be there during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation. This nation will then be uprooted (in the middle of the Tribulation) and driven back out among the Gentile nations. One-tenth of those presently in the land will be slain, with the remainder driven back out among the nations with the rest of world Jewry (Isa. 5:9-13; Matt. 24:15, 16; Rev. 12:6, 14).

And with that in mind, two things *MUST* be understood about the reappearance of the fig tree with leaves.

1) The fig tree has to do with *the whole house of Israel*, which, since the days of Moses, *has NEVER ceased to have both a national and racial existence*. The national existence may not be recognized by man between about 605 B.C. and 535 B.C. and between 70 A.D. and 1948 A.D., but nonetheless it has always existed throughout the Times of the Gentiles, always including *the whole house of Israel*, *NOT* just a remnant in the land returning from the days of the Babylonian captivity, or the remnant in the land under a Zionist movement today.

Possessing a national existence *does NOT* necessarily involve being separated from the rest of the nations and occupying a separate land. The Church has always possessed a national existence (I Peter 2:9, 10), separate from either Israel or the Gentile nations; and those comprising the Church have always been found scattered among these nations, without a present land of their own.

(The land belonging to Christians though is *in the heavens*, presently occupied by Satan and his angels. Thus, Christians *CANNOT* occupy a land during the present time, *ONLY* during that future day after Satan and his angels have been cast out.)

2) The fig tree with leaves will exist *throughout the seven years of the Tribulation*, *NOT* just during the first three and one-half years while a Jewish nation exists in the Middle East (note that a Jewish nation *will NOT* exist in the Middle East during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation, *though the fig tree with leaves will remain in existence*).

In this respect, the existence or non-existence of a Jewish nation in the Middle East during modern times really *has NOTHING* to do with the matter seen in Matt. 24:32-36, for, again, *the whole house of Israel* is in view — *EXACTLY as seen in the cursing of the fig tree in Matt. 21:18, 19 — NOT just the remnant in the land*.

Israel will be in travail throughout the entire seven years of the Tribulation (*cf.* Isa. 66:7, 8; Matt. 24:8; Rev. 12:1, 2), the birth of the nation will be about to occur, leaves will appear on the tree (anticipating fruit), and Satan will know these things.

Thus, he, through the man of sin, will use and maximize every resource at hand, as he turns his attention toward *ONE goal: the final solution to the Jewish problem — the complete and utter destruction of the nation of Israel, beginning with the remnant in the land and then continuing with the Jews dispersed among the nations worldwide*.

“Birth pangs” though portend *birth*, “leaves” portend *fruit*, and *God’s promises to Israel will NOT fail*. Though the nation will have to pass through its darkest hour, the dawn will arrive:

“The Sun of righteousness” shall “arise with healing in his wings...”
(Mal. 4:2).

In Matt. 24:33, when those during the Tribulation “see all these things” (things surrounding the fig tree with leaves in conjunction with the things seen back in previous verses, things which will occur during the Tribulation [vv.4-26, 32-36]), those on earth in that day, particularly the Jewish people, can know that Israel’s Messiah is “even at the doors.”

And the “generation” which sees these things come to pass during the Tribulation will not pass off the scene “till all these things be fulfilled” (v. 34).

The word translated “generation” in this verse (Gk., *genea*) could be understood in the sense of either “race” or “generation.” It is used both ways in Scripture.

If the former (“race”), the word would refer to *the indestructibility of the nation of Israel*; if the latter (“generation”), it would refer to *the same generation which saw the beginning will see the end*.

And since only seven years are involved from beginning to end, the former understanding of the word would evidently be the way in which the word is to be understood, *i.e.*, a reference to *Israel’s indestructibility* (cf. Isa. 54:17; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:20-26).

As well, this understanding of the word *genea* would be more in keeping with the overall scope of events seen in the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, with Satan in this section of Scripture, seen attempting, through every means at his disposal, to eradicate the nation of Israel from off the face of the earth.

That Day and Hour

Christians, through the signs of the times, can know the nearness of the Lord’s return; and the Lord has seen fit to supply His people with an abundance of information in this realm.

Christians though cannot know the day nor the hour. These specifics are reserved for the “Father only” (cf. Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32).

Within this framework, some Christians have been disturbed by the way Mark 13:32 reads (Matt. 24:36 also reads this same way in several of the better Greek manuscripts and is so translated in most later English versions [*ref.* ASV, NASB, NIV]):

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son, but the Father.*”

The way that this verse reads in the English text has left some with the thought that even Christ Himself did not know the day

and hour of His return, which, of course, would reflect negatively upon His deity.

Seeing this problem, some expositors have attempted to call attention to self-imposed limitations in connection with Christ's incarnation and appearance "in the likeness of sinful flesh" on the earth. Though viewing the matter after this fashion may seemingly solve the problem (though, in reality, it produces far more problems than it solves), the text actually relates something quite different.

Correctly translated, the text is really a direct allusion to the deity of Christ, showing to the ones being addressed that *He was EXACTLY Who He claimed to be.*

Matthew 24:36 also teaches the same truth with the addition of the words, "neither the Son," for the Greek manuscripts containing these words read the same way as the Greek text of Mark 13:32.

The Greek words *ei me*, appearing in and translated "but" in both Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, are the key to a correct understanding of these passages. And possibly the best comments on the matter were those given years ago by Archbishop Trench as he was expounding on the words *ei me* in Mark 13:32:

"The late Archbishop Trench, one of the greatest authorities on words, when lecturing to a London college, called attention to the fact that in the last part of this verse ['but the Father'], the two Greek words *ei me*, translated 'but,' really mean 'if not.' The Greek word *ei* means 'if,' and the Greek word *me* means 'not.' He called attention to the fact that any good Greek Concordance would reveal the same.

Archbishop Trench understood this verse to mean, 'If I were not God as well as man, even I would not know the day nor the hour.'

Thus, Mark 13:32 correctly translated would read:

'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son if not the Father.'

In other words, Jesus says that if He were not the Father He would not know. We have the same truth in John 9:33 with the same two Greek words, *ei me*, translated, 'if not' — 'If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.'"

— *Selected Writings of A. Edwin Wilson*

Thus, Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, rather than showing self-imposed limitations of the Son (the attempted explanation used in some Christian circles), or a non-deity status of the Son (as claimed by certain cults), are two of the most straightforward verses in the New Testament bearing witness to the Son's true identity.

He is one with the Father, possessing the same attributes. If He were not God, He would NOT know the day and hour of His return; but He is God, and He consequently DOES know.

Concluding Remarks:

The appearance of the fig tree with leaves once again will portend *that which can ONLY follow* — the appearance of fruit on the tree, the appearance of Israel bearing fruit.

Israel though *MUST first* pass through the nation's greatest time of suffering, the Great Tribulation. *THEN*, the nation will realize a calling which has been delayed for millenniums. *The Glory and the theocracy will be restored, and fruit will appear on the tree.*

1) Fig Leaves in Genesis

The fig tree with leaves *ONLY*, representing Israel in the same condition, should be understood in the light of the first mention of fig leaves in Scripture, for a first-mention principle regarding fig leaves — which remains unchanged throughout the remainder of Scripture — is seen in this opening part of Scripture.

Adam and Eve, following the fall, suddenly found themselves in a naked condition and tried to cover their nakedness with *fig-leaf aprons* (Gen. 3:7). It is evident that *the fig-leaf aprons* constituted their efforts to replace *a covering of Glory* which they lost at the time Adam, as the federal head of the human race about to descend from his lions, partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God is clothed "with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104:2), and man was created in the "image" and "likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Man, at the time of his creation, *could ONLY have been enswathed in a covering of Glory*, which had to do with the presence of God at all times. This covering was lost at the time of the fall, *separating man from God*, revealing the primary meaning of the word "death" — *i.e., separation from God* (cf. Gen. 2:17).

(Two different words are used for “naked” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:25; 3:7. The latter word, used in ch. 3, following the fall [geyrom], has to do with *utter, complete nakedness*. But something different is seen with the word used in ch. 2 before the fall [garom].

The word used before the fall could refer to *a man partially clothed, though viewed as naked because of the way he was partially clothed* — e.g., possessing an inner garment but not an outer garment.

Adam and Eve, before the fall, possessed *coverings of Glory* [the inner garments] but not the regal outer garments which they had been created to ultimately wear. *They were “naked” in this respect.*

Then, following the fall, with their loss of the coverings of Glory, with their *complete nakedness, they were in NO position to wear regal garments.*

Thus, the thought of *redemption* enters into the picture at this point in Scripture [latter part of ch. 3, continuing into ch. 4]. And *redemption* is seen to be for *ONE central purpose* — *in order that man might be placed back in a position where he can one day wear regal garments, ultimately occupying the position for which he had been created in the beginning.*)

From the point Adam sinned until the present time there has existed in Scripture what could be called “the fallen image,” a condition wrought through Adam’s fall, which will one day be rectified.

(Note Rom. 3:23 in this same respect:

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

It is not “eternal salvation” that *man comes short of* in this verse. Rather, it is “the glory of God” [see also Rom. 5:2].

This Glory was lost through “sin” in the past; and this is the manner in which conditions continue today.)

This fact will also reveal what is wrong with man’s body of “flesh” today. “Flesh” is presently spoken of as *sinful*. We read about the “works of the flesh” as opposed to the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-23; cf. Rom. 8:8; 13:14; Eph. 2:3), or about Christ coming to this earth in “the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

There is really *NOTHING* wrong with *flesh* per se. Man was created with a body of flesh, and redeemed man will possess a body of flesh throughout not only time (the millennial age) but eternity (the ages beyond).

The problem exists where there is *a body of flesh WITHOUT the covering of Glory*, a problem which *has NOT* always existed in the past and *will NOT* always exist in the future.

Christ coming in “the likeness of sinful flesh” is a reference to His appearance on this earth *WITHOUT the covering of Glory*

And except for the brief appearance after a different fashion on the Mount in Matt. 17:1-8, He lived on this earth and died at Golgotha apart from this covering. He was stripped of His garments, exposing the uncovered flesh, and arrayed as a mock King immediately preceding Calvary.

As He stood there in this array, *apart from His Glory*, He was spat upon, mocked, and smitten with a reed (representing a sceptre, which had been placed in His hand). He was then stripped of His garments again at Golgotha, exposing the uncovered flesh, bearing the sins of the world “in his own body” (Matt. 27:27-31; John 19:23; I Peter 2:24).

The ignominy and shame of these experiences cry out for the same scenes which witnessed His sufferings and humiliation to also witness His Glory and exaltation.

2) Fig Leaves in the Gospel Accounts

Now, what do these things have in common with *the fig tree* being cursed by Christ at the termination of His earthly ministry? What does the mention of *fig leaves* in connection with the fall of Adam have to do with Israel typified by *a fig tree with leaves ONLY*?

First, note the reason for Adam’s creation. Adam was created to supplant Satan as the ruler over this earth, and Eve was removed from Adam’s body to reign as consort queen with him (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:21-25). Satan, through sin, had been disqualified as the earth’s ruler (Isa. 14:13, 14); and an entirely new creation, created in the image and likeness of God, was brought on the scene to hold the sceptre.

However, Satan knowing this, brought about the First Adam’s fall and his resulting disqualification to assume the position for which he had been created. Thus, Satan continued to reign, even though disqualified to do so.

This reveals a principle of Biblical government. An incumbent, even though disqualified and rejected by God, continues to hold his divinely appointed office *until* he is actually replaced, which requires the one replacing him to not only be present but to also be ready to ascend the throne (note *Saul and David* in this respect, or the antitype, *Satan and Christ*).

Second, note the reason that Israel was brought into existence and established in the position of God's "firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22, 23). Israel, a special creation of God (Isa. 43:1), was called out of Egypt under Moses *to exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was to be the ruling nation on earth and the nation through which ALL of the Gentile nations would be reached and blessed* (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5, 6).

(Israel, as Abraham's seed, was also made the repository for heavenly promises and blessings [Gen. 14:18, 19; 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:12-14]. These promises and blessings though were taken from the nation following the cursing of the fig tree [Matt. 21:18, 19, 43] and are presently being offered to a separate and distinct nation, which is comprised of individuals who are neither Jew nor Gentile [cf. I Peter 2:9, 10; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-15].

But *the earthly promises and blessings* — which *were NOT* in view at Christ's first coming, which *were NOT* in view in the kingdom offered to Israel — will one day be entered into and experienced by the nation. These promises and blessings, having to do with the kingdom covenanted to David [cf. II Sam. 7:5-17; Ezek. 37:21-28; Luke 1:31-33], *can NEVER be taken from the nation.*)

In connection with Israel's calling, *the Glory* which man lost at the time of the fall was, after a fashion, restored to man at Mt. Sinai. Rather than *this Glory* abiding directly with man as preceding the fall though, an earthly tabernacle, patterned after an existing tabernacle in the heavens, was constructed to house *the Glory*.

Two things become evident at this point in Scripture:

- 1) No restoration of this aspect of Edenic conditions — man enswathed in a covering of Glory — can exist as long as man resides in a body of death.

2) The Glory is inseparably associated with man's rule over the earth.

The day came though, centuries later, because of continued disobedience, when this *Glory* was taken from Israel. About nineteen years after Nebuchadnezzar began carrying away Jewish captives into Babylon, God removed His *Glory*; *and this Glory will NOT be restored UNTIL that time when God places Israel under a new covenant and the nation occupies the position portended by the Glory.*

Between these two times the nation can rise NO higher in relation to regality than Adam following the fall — possessing NOTHING more than fig leaves at the very most.

Third, note that the cursing of the fig tree was a miraculous work. It was actually one-of-a-kind among miracles which Christ performed during His earthly ministry. All Christ's other miraculous works dealt with *deliverance*, but this one dealt with *judgment*.

And miraculous works performed by Christ (or for that matter, miraculous works performed by individuals anywhere else in Scripture [ref. Chapter VI in this book]) *were ALL peculiarly related to both Israel and the theocracy.*

Now, tying all of this together, one should be able to clearly see that *ALL these things are intimately associated with the government of the earth.*

Adam was created to rule and reign. But, because of sin, *the enswathment of Glory* (that which covered Adam's and Eve's bodies before the fall, associated with God's presence) had departed; and *NOTHING was left but fig leaves.*

It was the same with Israel. Israel had been brought into existence — a special creation (Isa. 43:1) — *to be the ruling nation within a theocracy.* But, because of sin (continued disobedience, over centuries of time), *the Glory* (the presence of God among His people, dwelling in the tabernacle and later the temple) had departed; and *NOTHING was left but fig leaves.*

The time when the Glory will be restored and fruit will reside on the tree is yet future. It will occur WHEN man is brought back into a realization of that which was lost in Adam being regained during the coming age in Christ, the second Man, the last Adam.

9

THE DAYS OF NOAH

The Dark Night, THEN, Above the Mountains...

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).

(The parable of the fig tree and a brief summation of the days of Noah conclude the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, capsulating, in a concluding manner, all which precedes in the discourse.

The budding of the fig tree shows not only the status of Israel during the Tribulation but portends fruit about to appear on the tree, the nation about to bear fruit.

And that which *the days of Noah* foreshadow will be brought to pass at the same time as the budding of the fig tree, with events which occur at the end of and following the Flood foreshadowing that which the budding of the fig tree portends — *Israel ultimately occupying the nation’s God-ordained place and bearing fruit.*

Then, all of this is detailed in a somewhat succinct manner in the preceding verses of the discourse.

This chapter, dealing with “The Days of Noah,” will approach the overall subject as presented by Scripture from two standpoints:

1. The Biblical account of events preceding, during, and following the Flood during Noah’s day, from a typical standpoint.
2. The mechanics of the Flood itself [particularly the meteorology and hydrology involved].

And it will become evident that things about the mechanics of the Flood *are not ONLY* vitally necessary to help explain the typical teachings surrounding the Flood *BUT* will also shed light upon two other parts of Scripture:

- 1) Events which occurred during the restoration of the material creation in Genesis chapter one.
- 2) Events which will occur during “the times of restitution [‘restoration’] of all things” yet future, seen in Acts 3:21.

The whole of Scripture is tied together in this manner, beginning in the Book of Genesis and concluding in the Book of Revelation.)

Evident from that stated in Matt. 24:38, 39, the people during Noah’s day were going about their everyday activities, completely oblivious to the destruction which was about to occur.

And, with conditions existing at the time of the beginning of the Flood during the days of Noah foreshadowing conditions which will exist at the beginning of the Tribulation during the days of the Son of Man, it is evident that these same conditions will prevail on earth immediately preceding Christ’s return for the Church, for the Tribulation will begin shortly thereafter.

And one only needs to have some knowledge of conditions during the days of Noah to look around at the world in which we live today and know that the world of that past day aptly describes the world as it exists during the present time.

People in the world today (the unsaved, and most Christians as well) are going about their everyday activities, completely oblivious to that which is about to occur — Christians being removed to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and the world, shortly thereafter, finding itself in the Tribulation.

And conditions in this respect will continue unchanged, with both Christians and the world at large *busily engaged in normal pursuits of life, UNTIL...*

The world *CANNOT* be expected to follow any other course. “The whole world lieth in wickedness [‘in the wicked one’]” (I John 5:19). *Satan* is “the god of this world [‘age’],” and “all the gods of the nations are idols [*lit.*, ‘nothing,’ as compared to the one true and living God; the translators of the Septuagint used the Greek

word *daimonia*, referring to ‘demons’]” (II Cor. 4:4; Ps. 96:5).

The world, enmeshed in humanism — with its goals, aims, ambitions, and aspirations — is following this type approach to all things in life. Thus, it is only natural for the world to pursue a pattern of life as given in the text.

But matters for Christians *should be completely different*. Too often though there is seemingly little to no difference between Christians and those in the world, with Christians today increasingly finding themselves being caught up in the humanistic ways and practices of the world.

This is nothing new in today’s world though. This type thing has been occurring throughout the present dispensation, for the past two millenniums.

There though is one difference in today’s world. *This type thing is presently occurring on a scale NOT heretofore seen in Christendom.*

Note the admonition of Scripture in I John 2:15-17 regarding Christians and their relationship to the world:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever [*lit.*, ‘abideth with respect to the age,’ an allusion to the Messianic Era].”

With reference to the days of Noah, along with the previous parable of the budding of the fig tree, a number of things are certain. And, in view of the times in which we live — very near the end of the dispensation, any way one looks upon the matter — the time for the occurrence of things seen throughout the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse are *very near at hand*:

1) God is about to conclude His dealings with the Church during the present dispensation.

2) God is about to once again deal with Israel, concluding the last seven years of the previous dispensation, fulfilling Daniel’s Seventieth Week.

3) Things are about to rapidly change upon the earth, in a very negative respect — changes wrought by Antichrist when he appears on the scene.

4) Christ will return following these changes being brought to an apex, changes of such a nature that *except for Christ's intervention in man's affairs once again, no flesh would survive.*

5) Then, following Christ's return, numerous changes will once again occur, though this time the changes will be just the opposite — changes wrought by Christ.

That's what the parable of the budding of the fig tree and the days of Noah, concluding the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse, have to do with. Both together carry a person through a time of unparalleled trouble about to come upon the earth (seen in previous verses). But both, as well, look out to that future day when the Son of Man will return as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (also seen in previous verses) and — through numerous subsequent events at the time of His return, followed by 1,000 years of judging — *straightens the whole matter out.*

Two Worldwide Floods

The Flood during Noah's day is not the first worldwide Flood seen in Scripture. Rather, the opening verses of Genesis provide an account of the first worldwide Flood and God's restoration of the material creation following this Flood. The Flood in these opening verses of Genesis, in chapter one, occurred during days preceding man's time on earth, with the restoration occurring immediately preceding man's creation.

Then, Genesis chapters seven and eight, having to do with events occurring over sixteen centuries later, recount the second worldwide Flood seen in Scripture, the Flood during Noah's day.

There is *a new beginning* following the Flood in Genesis chapter one, and there is *another new beginning* following the Flood during Noah's day in Genesis chapter eight. And the manner in which God subsequently wrought a restoration of the ruined material creation in chapter eight is *the SAME manner in which He had previously wrought a restoration of the ruined material creation in chapter one.*

This *MUST* be the case, for *an unchangeable pattern* concerning

how God restores a ruined creation was established at the beginning, as seen in the first chapter.

In Gen. 1:2, God used *raging waters* (the thought conveyed by the Hebrew word *tehom*, translated “deep”) to destroy the pre-Adamic earth following Satan’s attempt to *elevate his throne* to a position above his God-appointed position.

And in Gen. 7:11ff, God used *EXACTLY* the same means to destroy those upon the earth following Satan’s attempt to corrupt the human race through the cohabitation of “the sons of God [angels within Satan’s kingdom]” with “the daughters of men [female offspring from the lineage of Adam]” (Gen. 6:1-4).

(For additional information on the cohabitation of “the sons of God” with “the daughters of men,” refer to Chapter V, “In Those Days...Also After That” in the author’s book, *Jude*)

Particulars surrounding the way in which God brought about the pre-Adamic Flood and resulting destruction are not given in Scripture. The simple statement is made concerning existing conditions at the time of the Flood — *raging waters covering a darkened earth* — and aside from commentary such as II Peter 3:5, 6 (which provides little more in the way of particulars), God has seen fit to leave the matter unrevealed.

However, God did provide revelation concerning how He went about restoring this ruined earth for man, prior to man’s creation. He devoted almost an entire chapter to details surrounding this restoration, for an evident reason (Gen. 1:2b-25).

But revelation surrounding the Noachian Flood is quite different. God saw fit to provide numerous particulars concerning both the way in which He brought this Flood about and the way in which He effected restoration following the Flood. Part of chapter seven is devoted to the former (vv. 11-24), and part of chapter eight, along with Ps. 104:5-9, is devoted to the latter (vv. 1-14).

(*The destruction* produced by water during Noah’s day, the same as seen in chapter one, will be dealt with first [pp. 130=133a]; then, *the restoration* seen during Noah’s day, set alongside and /or compared with the restoration in chapter one, will subsequently be dealt with [pp. 133b-140a].)

Destruction by the Flood During Noah's Day

The waters which flooded the earth during Noah's day came from two sources — *from above the atmosphere* and *from below the earth's surface* (Gen. 7:11). During the restoration of the earth following the previous Flood in Gen. 1:2, God, on the second day of His restorative work, had placed the waters which *He later used to flood the earth once again* in two locations — *above the atmosphere* and *below the atmosphere* (Gen. 1:6-8), with the waters below the atmosphere placed both upon and below the earth's surface.

(The waters above the atmosphere evidently existed in the form of *a vapor canopy surrounding the earth*. Significant amounts of water in a liquid form would have affected light coming from the sun [ref. "Concluding Thoughts", pp. 141-146]. And the amount of water content which God placed above the atmosphere could only have been a tremendous amount [evident by the amount of rainfall at the time of the Flood].)

When God flooded the earth a second time, during Noah's day, He broke open "the fountains of the great deep" and opened "the windows of heaven [*i.e.*, 'the floodgates of heaven']" (7:11).

Subterranean waters began to gush up, and *torrential rain* (the central meaning of the Hebrew word translated "rain" in Gen. 7:12 [*geshem*], as distinguished from a different word for rain used back in v. 4 [*matar*]) began to fall through the atmosphere from the opened floodgates above the atmosphere (which could only have resulted from the vapor canopy condensing).

From the account given in Genesis, this continued unchanged for forty days and nights. Then, at the end of this time, the highest mountain peak on earth was covered to a depth of "fifteen cubits [about twenty-five feet]" (7:12-20).

And, except for the eight individuals and the animals in the ark:

"...all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (7:21, 22).

The subterranean waters though didn't cease gushing up at the end of forty days; nor did the torrential rain cease coming down from above at this time. Rather, *both continued, with NO revealed change, for another one hundred and ten days* (7:24-8:2).

It was ONLY after a full one hundred and fifty days that the subterranean waters ceased gushing up and the torrential rain ceased coming down (the same word for "rain" is used in the Hebrew text for rainfall during both the first forty days [7:12] and the additional one hundred and ten days [8:2], which, as previously noted, refers more particularly to *torrential rain*).

In this respect, what *could ONLY* have been *vast quantities of water* continuing to come up from below and down from above for an additional one hundred and ten days *could ONLY* have significantly added to the depth of the water which had already accumulated and completely covered the earth at the end of the first forty days. And, from the time involved, possibly almost three times as much water accumulated on the earth's surface during the additional one hundred ten days as had initially accumulated during the first forty days.

Thus, *at the end of the FULL one hundred and fifty days, the water level could ONLY have been far above that seen at the end of forty days*, when the highest mountain peak on earth was covered to a depth of about twenty-five feet. The water depth one hundred ten days later would undoubtedly have been at least hundreds, possibly thousands, of feet above the highest point on earth; we're not told.

(Note that the topography of the antediluvian earth was quite different than that which exists today. Mountain peaks in the antediluvian world *could ONLY* have been considerably lower, for reasons which become evident when one views Scripture dealing with how God restored the earth following the Flood.

God's restoration following both the Flood preceding man's creation in Genesis chapter one and the Flood during Noah's day in chapter eight involved *the movement of water from one place to another, allowing dry land to appear* [cf. Gen. 1:9, 10; 8:5-14], with the water moved to different places in each instance.

Restoration following the Flood which preceded man's creation in chapter one occurred through God placing part of the water above the

atmosphere and part below the atmosphere, both on the surface and below the surface of the earth [1:2, 6, 7].

Restoration following the Flood during Noah's day in chapter eight occurred through God raising portions of the land beneath the water [ultimately forming mountainous or high terrain] and lowering other portions of the land [forming mainly ocean basins], with water moving from the land being raised to the land being lowered, as seen in Ps 104:5-9:

"He established the earth upon its foundation,
So that it will not totter ['move out of its place'] forever and
ever.

Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment;
The waters were standing above the mountains.
At Thy rebuke they fled;
At the sound of Thy thunder they turned away.
The mountains rose; the valleys sank down
To the place which Thou didst establish for them.
Thou didst set a boundary that they may not pass over;
That they may not return to cover the earth" (NASB).

Part of the water flooding the earth had come from subterranean sources. It appears evident though that this subterranean supply of water was left on the surface of the earth at the time of the restoration following the Flood, for only about three percent of the earth's total water supply lies in subterranean sources today. The remainder, about ninety-seven percent, lies on the surface of the earth, mainly in the oceans. And it is evident that none of this water was placed back in the heavens above the atmosphere, for it is *not* there today.

[These figures — three percent, leaving ninety-seven percent — are derived from The U.S. Geological Survey's records from past years. The accuracy could be somewhat open to question; though, with today's technology, the figures are probably fairly accurate.]

Then, concerning the antediluvian mountains, how high would they have been for water to have covered all of them at the end of the first forty days of the Flood? We can know that vast changes in the earth's topography began to occur at the end of the full one hundred fifty days, immediately following the time that God closed the flood-gates of heaven and stopped the subterranean waters from coming up.

But, the elevation of antediluvian topography, no one knows; nor can they know, for there is no data to work with.)

Thus, *at the end of the first forty days of the Flood*, the ark rested, floated, on a shoreless ocean, with the water level about twenty-five feet above the highest point on earth. And the ark continued floating on a shoreless ocean, with subterranean waters continuing to gush up from below the earth's surface and torrential rain continuing to fall from the supply of water above the atmosphere *for another one hundred and ten days*, which could only have progressively raised the water level higher and higher.

ONLY at the end of the full one hundred and fifty days did God step in and close both the floodgates of heaven and the fountains of the deep (8:2). Apparently all of the water above the atmosphere had fallen (for, again, none remains there today), though that would not appear to be the case with the water below the earth's surface (for, as previously noted, about three percent of the earth's total water supply can be found below the earth's surface today).

God apparently waited until the entire supply of water above the atmosphere had been depleted, which required one hundred and fifty days of torrential rainfall. Then He closed both the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters.

Restoration Following the Flood

On the one hundred fiftieth day of the Flood, when God stepped in and put a stop to matters (*cf.* 7:11; 8:1-4), Scripture locates the ark in relation to a place on the land beneath the water by stating:

“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat” (8:4).

OR, is the preceding REALLY what Scripture states?

This is the way that all of the widely-used English translations read, which have seemingly followed one another in the translation of this verse. But how could this be correct if the water level continued to rise for a total of *one hundred and fifty days* in the manner previously seen, which, *from a Scriptural standpoint, is really the ONLY possible way to view the matter?*

This fact should have caught the attention of at least some of

the translators, for the Hebrew word translated “upon” (*al*) in this verse *can also be understood and translated* as “over” or “above.” For example, it is translated “over” in the opening verse of this same chapter (“pass *over* the earth”), or it is translated “above” back in chapter one (“fly *above* the earth” [v. 20]).

This Hebrew word has to be understood *contextually*. And in Gen. 8:4, as is evident from the context introducing this verse (and even more evident from the verses following), *the translation should be “above” or “over,” NOT “upon.”*

That is, at the end of one hundred and fifty days, when the supply of water above the atmosphere had evidently been depleted and God stepped in and closed both the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters, *Gen. 8:4 locates the ark in relation to a point on the earth beneath the waters, below the ark. This verse locates the ark in relation to the Ararat mountain range* (a range which stretches from modern-day Turkey eastward into Armenia).

And that this is the correct way to view Gen. 8:4 is a simple matter to illustrate, not only from Scripture preceding the verse (as has already been shown) but from Scripture following the verse as well.

Genesis 8:1, 3, 5 clearly reveals that God *NOT ONLY* closed the floodgates of heaven and the sources of the subterranean waters at the end of one hundred and fifty days *BUT* that He also began a restorative work at this same time.

Immediately following the Flood waters reaching their highest level on the one hundred and fiftieth day, these waters began to recede. And it took about five and one-half months for the level to drop completely, though almost two more months were required after that for the face of the earth to become dry (cf. 8:1-4, 13, 14).

IF the ark had come to rest on a mountain peak in the Ararat range on the day that God closed both sources of the Flood waters and began His restorative work, resulting in the waters continually receding, *it could NOT have been too many days before dry land appeared around the ark.*

But this *DIDN'T* happen. It wasn't until almost two and one-half months had passed that *the tops of the mountains began to appear above the waters* (8:5).

Then, after another forty days had elapsed, Noah sent forth a dove, which found “no rest for the sole of her foot” (8:6-9).

That is to say, almost four months after the waters began to recede, *there was NO dry land around the ark*, though seven days later, when Noah sent the dove forth again, the dove *did find dry land within flying distance of the ark* (8:10, 11).

Where did the ark finally come to rest following the Flood?

We’re NOT told. From the way that the text reads though — Noah having to wait for about two months after the waters had completely subsided for the face of the earth to become dry — the ark apparently came to rest in an unrevealed place in the lowlands.

Also, it could *possibly* be stated that the ark’s resting place would be somewhere west of where the city of Babylon was built two generations following the end of the Flood, for, to arrive at this location, those who built Babylon migrated *eastward* to a plain in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:5-10; 11:1ff). This would only be a *possibility* though, for there could have been a migration of people to locations away from the vicinity of where the ark came to rest during time covering two generations (note that the direction of migration in Gen. 11:2 should be translated “eastward” rather than “from the east,” as in the KJV [ref. NASB, NIV]).

What difference though does all of this make, and why spend this time showing an incorrect translation and understanding of Gen. 8:4? Actually, it makes *a great deal of difference*, for if an individual follows the incorrect translation and understanding of Gen. 8:4, the door is closed to tremendous Biblical truths *which can be seen in verses one through four ONLY by viewing verse four correctly.*

1) Paralleling Two New Beginnings

As previously seen, Gen. 1:2 and Gen. 8:1 have to do with *introductory information concerning new beginnings following two different Floods*, one pre-Adamic, and the other post-Adamic. This parallel though is usually missed through following the English translation of Gen. 8:1 *and NOT understanding that the latter MUST follow that previously established in the former.*

The Hebrew word *Ruach* appears in both verses. In Gen. 1:2, this word is translated “Spirit”; but in Gen. 8:1, this word has

been translated “wind” and separated from the same parallel thought seen in *how God begins His restorative work in this respect*, as established back in Gen. 1:2.

(“Wind” or “breath” can be correct translations of *Ruach*, if the context permits [as “wind” or “breath” can also be seen at times as correct translations of *Pneuma*, the corresponding word in the Greek N.T., usually translated “Spirit”]. But there is *NOTHING* in the context of Gen. 8:1 which would suggest understanding *Ruach* as “wind.”

The word *Ruach* is only used five times between Gen. 1:2 and 8:1 [3:8; 6:3, 17; 7:15, 22]. The last three usages have been translated and should be understood as “breath.” And the other two should probably be understood and translated in a similar manner as well [note, the numerous times *Ruach* is translated and understood as “breath” in Ezek. 37:5-10].)

The movement of God’s *Ruach* over the face of the waters in both Gen. 1:2 and Gen. 8:1 *MUST* be understood the same way in both instances, for the pattern concerning how God begins His restorative work involving a ruined creation *was revealed and set in an unchangeable manner in Gen. 1:2*.

Thus, *the beginning of God’s subsequent restorative work in Gen. 8:1 MUST be viewed EXACTLY the same way. The Spirit of God or the Breath of God (which produces life [cf. Gen. 2:7]) MUST be seen moving upon or across the face of the waters in both instances.*

(In relation to God’s breath providing life, as introduced in Gen. 2:7 [establishing a First-Mention Principle, which *can NEVER change*], note ruined man today — another ruined creation, ruined following the restoration of the ruined material creation in Gen. 1:2ff.

How does God go about restoring ruined man, who is “dead in trespasses and sins” [Eph. 2:1]? The answer is seen in these two passages in Genesis [1:2; 8:1]; and *the means which God uses to restore ruined man, as seen in these two passages of Scripture, can NEVER change.*

The Spirit of God moves upon the ruined creation. The Spirit breathes life into the one having no life, and man passes “from death unto life” [John 5:24]. Everything is accomplished entirely through Divine intervention.

Ruined man today is JUST as powerless to bring himself out of his ruined state as was the ruined material creation in both Genesis chapters one and eight.

Had God NOT acted in Genesis chapters one and eight, the earth would still be covered by water today and would forever remain covered by water, apart from Divine intervention at some future time.

Had God NOT acted at Calvary, in the person of His Son, ruined man would forever be left in his present condition — “dead in trespasses and sins.”

And should the Spirit of God NOT act today, on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary — breathing life into the one who has no life — man could NEVER pass “from death unto life.” Man could NEVER move out of his ruined state simply because there is ONLY one revealed way that God restores a ruined creation, and it is either accomplished through God’s revealed way OR there is NO restoration [Acts 4:12].)

Scripture *MUST* be understood and interpreted in the light of Scripture. And, understanding Gen. 8:1 in the light of and in the same respect as previously seen in Gen. 1:2 becomes *vitally necessary* to properly understand that which is in view in verse four, where another corrected translation is necessary.

2) *Over the Mountains of Ararat*

At the end of the Flood, after the utter destruction which had affected “all in whose nostrils was the breath of life,” save those on the ark, Noah and his family found themselves *at a location above* “the mountains of Ararat.”

Then, on this same day, the Spirit of God set about to effect restoration, *EXACTLY* as previously seen in Genesis chapter one. And also, *EXACTLY* as previously seen in chapter one, this restoration was *for purposes surrounding regality*.

Regality in Genesis chapter one is shown through a direct statement regarding the reason for man’s creation: “...let them have dominion [or, ‘...let them rule’]” (vv. 26, 28). The Hebrew word translated “dominion” in these two verses is *radah*, the same word translated “rule” in Ps. 110:2, where Christ will rule as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek during the coming day of His power (v. 4; cf. Gen. 14:18ff; Heb. 5-7).

Regality in Genesis chapter eight though is shown through a different fashion than in chapter one. “A mountain” in Scripture signifies *a kingdom*. And at the end of the Flood (foreshadowing

the end of the coming Tribulation), those in the ark (foreshadowing the nation of Israel in that day) found themselves *resting in a place of safety ABOVE the mountains of Ararat* (foreshadowing the nation of Israel in that coming day, *resting in a place of safety ABOVE ALL the kingdoms of the world, NO LONGER the tail, BUT elevated to the head*).

The name “Ararat” itself, a transliterated Hebrew word, comes from a root word which means *holy ground*. And this is *EXACTLY* where Israel will find herself once the nation has been restored to the land in that coming day.

(The word “holy” is used numerous times throughout Scripture in relation to God. And the same word is used numerous times as well in relation to different things as they pertain to the Jewish people — the people themselves, Jerusalem, the Temple, and the land as a whole [cf. Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; Ps. 2:6; 11:4; 65:4; 78:41; Zeph. 2:12; 3:11].

The word “holy” carries the thought of set apart [unto the Lord]. This is the only way in which the word can be used relative to inanimate objects; and this same meaning would still apply when used relative to the people of Israel, though it could extend beyond this into the thought of *purity* [which is actually an extension of the thought of being set apart].)

The entire earth is referred to in Scripture as “the holy mountain of God [*i.e.*, ‘the set apart kingdom of God’]” (Ezek. 28:14).

However, Satan, *the ruler over this kingdom*, because of his aspirations to extend his rule beyond that which God had appointed him to occupy, introduced corruption, resulting in his kingdom being reduced to a ruined state.

Later, after the kingdom had been restored and man had been created *to rule the kingdom in the stead of Satan*, man’s fall resulted in the same thing. Corruption was reintroduced into the kingdom, and this corruption affected both man and the material creation.

Then, later yet, the nation of Israel was brought into existence and called forth, as *a set apart people, to rule in a set apart land, within a theocracy*.

But the Lord’s name, the people, the Temple, and the land were all later *polluted, defiled, profaned* through a continued disobedience

of God's people (cf. Num. 35:33, 34; Ps. 79:1; Ezek. 14:11; 20:43; 23:38; 36:20; Hosea 5:3; 6:10).

And Israel, the wife of Jehovah, climaxed the nation's disobedience *by taking up unholy alliances with the surrounding Gentile nations* — something which God had forbidden in no uncertain terms (cf. Num. 23:9; Deut. 7:1-6). *And these alliances were viewed in Scripture as harlotry on Israel's part* (cf. Jer. 3:1-4; Ezek. 16:2, 28, 29).

The day came when Israel's cup of iniquity became full (cf. Gen. 15:16), and *God drove His adulterous wife out among her Gentile lovers to effect repentance through persecution at the hands of her lovers, which is EXACTLY where Israel is seen in the world today.*

Israel today is seen as *"the great whore," residing among her Gentile lovers.* And because of this, Israel is presently seen associated with both *Babylon and Jerusalem*, but only with *Jerusalem* in the respect that *Jerusalem, during this time, is seen associated with Sodom and Egypt* (Rev. 11:8; 17:1-7, 18).

(For a discussion of Revelation chapters eleven, twelve, and seventeen through the first part of nineteen in the preceding respect, refer to the author's book, *Mystery of the Woman*, or to Chapters XXI, XXVII, and XXVIII in the author's book, *The Time of the End*.)

The day is coming though when all of this will change. Israel, through the judgments of the Tribulation, will be brought to the place of repentance. This will be followed by *the harlot being cleansed and restored to her rightful place in a cleansed land, within a theocracy.*

Then, that foreshadowed by Gen. 8:4 — Noah and his family *resting ABOVE the mountains of Ararat* — will be realized. Gentile world power will have been *destroyed* (typified by the *destruction* occurring during the Flood). And Israel, in that coming day, will find herself *at rest, placed ABOVE ALL the kingdoms of the world, in a holy place* (cf. Zech. 14:9, 20, 21).

This is EXACTLY what is also seen in Rev. 12:1b and Rev. 17:18b.

A woman is seen in chapter twelve as the one possessing "a crown of twelve stars," with the number "twelve" signifying *governmental perfection.*

Then, allowing Scripture to continue interpreting itself, a harlot

is seen in chapter seventeen as “the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth” (literal translation from the Greek text in v. 18b).

That seen in both Rev. 12:1b and 17:18b points to that which awaits Israel *following her cleansing* (Rev. 17:16, 17; 19:3). That is to say, *Israel, also seen as God’s firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23), *holds this regal position today but CANNOT exercise this position UNTIL AFTER the nation has been cleansed.*

And the fact that *Israel will one day be cleansed and ultimately exercise this position* was all foretold back in Gen. 8:4.

3) *Shem, Ham, Japheth*

Genesis chapter nine then adds to a developing Old Testament word picture. Among Noah’s three sons following the Flood, *ONLY one — Shem — was blessed and said to have a God* (v. 26). And from Shem descended Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, his twelve sons, and the nation of Israel.

Since Shem is *the ONLY one stated to have been blessed and to have a God*, in order for the other two sons to have received spiritual blessings, they would have had to go to Shem — something stated in the text in relation to Japheth through his having to dwell in the tents of Shem (v. 27).

This is *the SAME position* which Shem’s descendant, Abraham, held in relation to the nations; and this is *the SAME position* which the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob have held, continue to hold today, and will always hold relative to the nations. If the nations are to be blessed, *it MUST be accomplished through the means which God has decreed — through Abraham and his seed, through Isaac and Jacob* (Gen. 12:1-3).

That’s the importance seen in the Noachian Flood and that which occurred following the Flood. And that’s the importance seen in the vast amount of space which God has provided in His Word surrounding that which the Flood foreshadows.

Israel *MUST* be brought to the place of repentance. *ONLY THEN* can that foreshadowed in Gen. 8:4; 9:26, 27 be realized, *with blessings flowing from a restored people, in a restored city and land, out to the nations of the earth.*

Concluding Thoughts (Meteorology and Hydrology):

(The remainder of this chapter has to do with meteorology and hydrology, dealing centrally with the mechanics of how both acted together in relation to the Noachian Flood.

After writing this material, I asked a long-time friend with a graduate degree in meteorology and some thirty years work in his field above his degree work [with the National Weather Service] to review the chapter in general and the following part of the chapter in particular. His comments involved the following part of the chapter only, though they would reflect on some previous parts of the chapter as well.

These comments may be helpful to some readers. Thus, with this man's permission, I have included them at the end of the material [as "End Notes"], with superscript numbers in the text showing the different places to which these end notes refer.)

A basic understanding of meteorology and hydrology, as different things in these two sciences pertain to that which occurred during the Noachian Flood (and even the previous Flood in Genesis chapter one), will help one to understand that which God brought to pass at this time. And, along with this is "the times of restitution ['restoration'] of all things" in Acts 3:21, which fits into the overall scope of the matter as well.

First, meteorological conditions, as we know them today, did not exist prior to the time of the Flood during Noah's day. Prior to this time, with what was evidently a vapor canopy enveloping the earth, above the atmosphere,¹ the entire earth could only have existed in a greenhouse-type setting (though not in a true greenhouse-type setting, for air masses moved about [Gen. 3:8 — translate "cool" as "breeze," evidently associated with *God's breath*; Heb., *Ruach*]). Temperatures would have been fairly uniform throughout the earth, with no polar caps covered with ice, as we know them today.²

And this accounts for man during modern times finding such things as the remains of vast quantities of tropical vegetation and tropical animals encased in ice in the Arctic regions.

With this near-greenhouse-type setting, meteorological conditions could only have been quite different from those existing on the earth today — a condition which lasted for over sixteen centuries, from the creation of Adam to the Flood during Noah's

day, ten generations later.

During this time there were no weather systems of the nature seen today (high and low pressure areas, frontal zones, developing thunderstorms, etc.). The whole of the earth's present weather system was set in motion at a time in the past, with this system and the motion of this system both introduced and sustained by two things:

1) *First, by the sun producing an uneven heating of the earth's surface.*

2) *Then, forces produced by the rotation of the earth governing the movement of air masses resulting from the sun's uneven heating of the earth's surface.*

Remove the first, *the uneven heating of the earth's surface*, and there would be no air masses of the nature under discussion for the forces produced by the rotation of the earth to move (*i.e.*, different pressure systems, frontal zones, etc.). Apart from the first, *the uneven heating of the earth's surface*, the complete worldwide weather system, as it exists today, would change completely.³

One will search in vain for any mention of "rain" falling during the period extending from Adam to Noah. There was no uneven heating of the earth's surface — something necessary to produce conditions which would lift air to higher altitudes, cooling the air until it reached its condensation point, at which time the water vapor in the atmosphere would condense and fall back to the earth as some type precipitation (rain, snow, etc.). Apart from this sequence, which begins with the sun producing an uneven heating of the earth's surface, resulting in conditions which will lift the air (convection, frontal zones, air masses moved over mountainous terrain), there can be no rain or any other type precipitation.⁴

These conditions did not exist in the antediluvian world. Thus, there was no "rain" (Gen. 2:5). Rather, God provided for "a mist from the earth" to ascend and "water the whole face of the ground" (Gen. 2:6).

Also during this time, with harmful rays of the sun evidently being filtered out by the vapor canopy above the atmosphere (along with a probable difference in atmospheric pressure from that which exists today, due to the presence of the vapor canopy

above the atmosphere), man lived for hundreds of years and could beget children during at least much of this time (e.g., Noah begetting sons at the age of five hundred in Gen. 5:32). The average life-span of man during this time, covering the ten generations from Adam to Noah (excluding Enoch, who was translated), was *nine hundred twelve years*.⁵

But once the vapor canopy had been removed, allowing the sun's rays to come through unfiltered (with a probable change in atmospheric pressure on earth as well, due to the loss of the vapor canopy above the atmosphere), *man's longevity was cut in half almost immediately* (Shem, 600 years; Shem's son Arphaxad, 438 years; Arphaxad's son Salah, 433 years). Going on two more generations beyond Salah, *man's longevity was cut almost in half again* (Peleg and his son Reu, both 239 years; Reu's son Serug, 230 years).

And by the time of Abraham, three generations beyond Serug, ten generations beyond Noah (350 years from the Flood to the birth of Abraham) — with a continued, progressive genetic deterioration within man — *the length of time man lived was down to between one and two hundred years* (Abraham, 137 years; Isaac, 180 years; Jacob, 147 years; Joseph, 110 years). And man today fares worse yet.

Once the waters above the atmosphere had all fallen through the opened floodgates of heaven, doing away with the greenhouse-type conditions which had previously existed on earth, meteorological conditions as we know them today came into existence.

An uneven heating of the earth's surface by the sun — something which had not heretofore existed because of the vapor canopy surrounding the earth — set all of it in motion.⁶

At this time, Noah and his family were in the ark above the Ararat mountain range, floating on a deep, shoreless ocean. And, apart from any lapse of time (on the 150th day, after God had closed the floodgates of heaven and had stopped the subterranean waters from coming up), He immediately began a restorative work. He immediately began to raise and lower different land masses, causing different bodies of water to move from one point to another.

Some Bible students knowing or understanding that which Scripture has to say about God restoring the earth in Gen. 1, causing dry land to reappear above the waters, often give little

thought to “how” this was brought to pass in Gen. 8.

Ignoring that stated in Ps. 104:5-9, some think in terms of *an evaporation of the water over time*, which, of course, is not feasible at all. Water doesn't simply evaporate and then just disappear.

Rather, the evaporation of water saturates the atmosphere, and the atmosphere can only hold so much water content before it becomes completely saturated (depending on the pressure and temperature of the air being saturated).⁷

The atmosphere (regardless of the pressure and temperature) can actually hold *very little water content before it becomes completely saturated* (an amount equivalent, at the most, to just several inches removed from a given body of water into a given part of the atmosphere).⁸ Then, once the atmosphere has become completely saturated, the evaporated water (now in vapor form) will, at some point in time, condense and fall back to the earth in the form of rain, snow, etc.

This is the type water cycle existing on earth today — moving evaporated water from the oceans and lakes over land areas, with this water vapor later condensing, falling back to the earth, and eventually finding its way back to the oceans and lakes via rivers, etc.

In short, had God not acted following His closing the floodgates of heaven and the subterranean sources which had produced the waters flooding the earth, evaporation over millenniums of time would *NEVER* have lowered that water level more than just several inches. Apart from any of that water seeping into the ground or escaping into space, a continuous hydrological cycle would have been going on for the entire time — from Noah's day to the present day (over forty-three hundred years) — lowering the water level several inches by evaporation and then bringing it back to the same level again as this water vapor condensed in the atmosphere and fell back upon a shoreless ocean as precipitation.⁹

The manner in which God restored the earth in Genesis chapter eight (though not a restoration to Edenic conditions, as in chapter one) will explain numerous things (*e.g.*, the water-ravaged western United States, particularly the Grand Canyon [evidently formed by water rushing toward the Pacific basin from the Rocky Mountain area as the former was being lowered and the latter was

being raised], or the tangled skeletal remains of dinosaurs buried beneath what are today dry river beds in northwestern Colorado [at Dinosaur National Monument], among other places).

But, during “the times of restitution [‘restoration’] of all things” — when the Messianic Era is ushered in — God is going to reverse all of this. The vast quantities of water which once existed above the atmosphere are going to be placed back up there. Meteorological conditions will change accordingly, Edenic conditions will once again exist, and man will once again live for centuries.

In fact, man in that coming day will live for the duration of the Millennium, in a natural body, moving right on into the eternal ages in this same type body.

When Adam was created, he was created in *an undying, natural body, designed and created by God to exist forever*. And man is going to one day be brought back into that state.

— End Notes —

¹The nature of the water substance in the “waters above the atmosphere” has always intrigued me. There may have been some combination of liquid water along with a deep layer of saturated vapor which completely removed UV wavelengths from the light reaching the surface of the earth. Water vapor is transparent to UV radiation, whereas nearly all UV radiation is absorbed by pure water 40-50 meters in depth. Maybe there was enough liquid depth to remove harmful UV radiation and to support currents of water that distributed heat energy in the waters above the atmosphere.

²There would have had to be temperature variations to support breezes since pressure equals density times gas constant times temperature (K). If the temperature and density were constant, the pressure would have to be constant. Without a pressure gradient, there would be no wind. Obviously there would be solar radiation differences from the polar regions to the equatorial regions, and the earth must have been rotating since night and day occurred before the Flood.

Much of the energy distribution must have occurred in the water substance above the atmosphere with most of the radiation reaching the earth in the infrared range from the water substance. There would, then, have been only weak temperature gradients, supporting relatively

weak flow on the surface of the earth.

With the rotation of the earth, the temperature differences probably would have been concentrated in the central latitudes, as is the case today. Rotation rate of the earth and the strength of the coriolis coefficient [forces produced by the rotation of the earth] are unknown. The rotation rate likely was altered when the waters above the atmosphere were drained. Variation in the coriolis parameter would affect the strength of winds around any pressure systems that did develop.

³ Well stated. The only reason we have weather is to compensate for the uneven distribution of solar radiation on the earth. With the large volume of water substance above the earth before the Flood, much of the solar imbalance likely was removed by the water layer, regardless of its phase.

⁴ Note also that instability to support things like thunderstorms requires a temperature decrease with height. If much of the heating of the earth's surface was coming from the large volume of water substance at the top of the atmosphere at that time, the atmosphere below the water layer probably was very stable.

As such, things like thunderstorms as we know them would not have been possible. If there were some kind of forced ascent with areas of low pressure or frontal boundaries, there probably would have been dense fog and heavy drizzle or light rain. Maybe this forced lifting and shallow water droplet formation constituted the "mist from the ground." It is possible that God had ordained something completely different like a sprinkler system from the vast reservoir of water below the ground. I don't know...

⁵ See the previous note about UV penetration in water (end note 1).

⁶ With the loss of the water substance aloft, UV A and UV B radiation would have reached the earth's surface, much as occurs today.

⁷ Absolutely right. Evaporation could not have removed the huge volume of water from the Flood. Regardless of the pressure and temperature, the water molecules condensing on the surface of the liquid and the water molecules achieving enough energy to escape the liquid bonds are in balance at saturation.

⁸ In the current atmosphere, condensing all of the water vapor would cover the earth with just over an inch of liquid water. In the tropics, precipitable water may reach values of three inches or so.

⁹ The water would have had to escape to space or return to the subterranean reservoir.

Christian Section

Chapters 10-21

10

ONE TAKEN, ANOTHER LEFT

Received Alongside, OR Turned Away

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Responsibility, Accountability, the Goal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Received or Turned Away

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

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

These verses reveal the Lord’s dealings with two Christians who will be in the field and two other Christians who will be grinding at the mill (representative individuals, places, and occupations) when He returns to reckon with His servants; and this reckoning will occur, *NOT in the field or at the mill, BUT before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven following the rapture. The time and place of this reckoning are ALWAYS the same in Scripture (ref. section in parenthesis, p. 158).*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note also Wuest’s “Expanded Translation”:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saving of the Life

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) Remember Lot's Wife

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

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

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

Two significant things stand out concerning Lot's wife:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christ stated during His earthly ministry:

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

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

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

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

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

interested in the things of the mountain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11

THE HOUSEHOLDER AND HIS SERVANT

Has Provided Instructions, to Be Followed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ONLY THEN will God resume His national dealings with Israel.

Further, at this point in Matthew’s gospel, the proffered kingdom (the kingdom of the heavens) had been taken from Israel, and this aspect of the kingdom is that which is in view throughout the Olivet Discourse parables (*cf.* Matt. 25:1).

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

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

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

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

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

A Change in Stewardship

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) *A House Left Desolate*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) Stewardship in a New House

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The religious leaders in Israel though, rather than bringing forth “fruits meet for repentance,” did everything in their power to subvert this offer. The husbandmen placed over the vineyard, as described by Christ, “shut up the kingdom of the heavens against [‘before,’ ‘in the presence of’] men” (Matt. 23:13). *They were NOT going to enter the kingdom, and they did EVERYTHING within their power to prevent the nation itself from entering*

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

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

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

It could be better translated:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For additional information on this subject refer to Appendix III in this book, "Ages and Dispensations.")

Faithful and Unfaithful Stewards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) *Command of the Householder*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) *Reward, Chastisement by the Householder*

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

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

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

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

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

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

12

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

ALL Had Oil in Their Lamps, BUT...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Kingdom of the Heavens

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

“...the heavens do rule” (Dan. 4:26).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ten Virgins with Lamps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ten Virgins Going Forth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Five Wise and Five Foolish

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oil in the Lamps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) Symbolism and Use of Oil in the Old Testament

“Oil” was used in the Old Testament Scriptures to *anoint prophets, priests, and kings*; and there was a connection between the use of oil after this fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower him for duties in the office to which he was being consecrated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) The New Testament Experience

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

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

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

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

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

And the same parallel can be seen in Christendom today.

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

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

In Ephesians, Christians are told:

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

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

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

In Colossians, Christians are told:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As evident, such is simply NOT possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The difference lies in two related realms:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Concluding Remarks:

Scripture places an emphasis in two realms:

- 1) Christians knowing and understanding things pertaining to the return of the Bridegroom and the kingdom which follows.
- 2) Christians making proper preparation during the present day for that future day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Christ's Judgment Seat and Beyond

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Time, Purpose of the Midnight Cry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matt. 25:6 could be better translated:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and grasp the complete, overall picture.

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

Midnight

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) In Egypt

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) On the Threshing Floor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) "Wash Thyself"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Ruth's case, she washed herself.

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

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

b) "Anoint Thee"

"Oil" was used in the Old Testament Scriptures to anoint prophets, priests, and kings; and there was a connection between the use of oil after this fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower him for duties in the office to which he was being consecrated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

c) "Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some will possess wedding garments, and others will not.

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

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

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

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

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

Concluding Remarks:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14

GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM

ALL Going Out Prepared OR Unprepared

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Arose, Trimmed Their Lamps

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

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

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

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

The manner in which this is presented in the parable *renders it unthinkable that Christians would NOT hear this message* — a message

concerning the coming kingdom, which ALL Christians are supposed to hear, for it is the CENTRAL message within the instructions which the Householder left with His household servants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is seen in the structure of the Greek text. There are two nouns

in the same case form, connected by *kai* [and], with a definite article preceding the first noun but not repeated before the second noun. In a structure of this nature, the second noun [*didaskalos*, “teacher”] is seen as simply a further description of the first noun [*poimen*, “pastor,” “shepherd”].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

strong meat (*cf.* Heb. 5:11-14; I Peter 2:1, 2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lamps Continuing to Burn, Going Out

The lamps carried by all ten virgins were burning; otherwise there could be *NO trimming of all the lamps or a going OUT of some of the lamps.* The distinguishing difference between the wise and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A spiritual warfare is presently being waged, and it is one

between men upon the earth and fallen angels in the heavens:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christians need to face reality concerning that which is clearly revealed in Scripture. Christians have a calling which involves

their one day ascending into a heavenly realm and replacing the incumbent rulers. Christ will occupy the position presently held by Satan, and Christians will occupy positions presently held by angels ruling under Satan. Christians will occupy these positions as co-heirs with Christ, seated with Christ on His throne.

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

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

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

BUT, a change is in the offing.

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

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

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

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

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

Go and Buy for Yourselves

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

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

to the source of supply, and they were to go themselves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is the reason Scripture states:

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

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

Warning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) *Conditions in Christendom*

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

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

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

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

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

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) A Counterfeit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For a discussion of the difference in how the words *pletho* and *pleroo* are used in the Greek New Testament, refer to Chapter XII, pp. 192-194, in this book.

Also, for more information on Satan's counterfeiting work of the Spirit in connection with a present-day counterfeit having to do with signs, wonders, and miracles, refer to Chapter VI in this book.)

Thus, the counterfeit message and work of Satan pertaining to a present filling of the Spirit — which would, of necessity, involve supernatural power (the work of *spirits* [demons], *NOT the Spirit*) — exists because of a misinterpretation of Scripture. Those involved in what is called a "renewal" have been deceived by ministers of Satan (II Cor. 11:13-15) through their use (actually, misuse) of the Word of God. Resultingly, *an experience* has been substituted for *a reception of "the implanted word."*

Deception in this realm is *rampant* in certain quarters; and since there can be no victory over the heavenly principalities and powers apart from acquiring the extra portion of Oil, which a pseudo work of the Spirit *does NOT* provide at all, this would have to be looked upon as *one of the deadliest of all deceptions*.

A counterfeit work of this nature leaves the recipients in *EXACTLY* the same position as the ones seen in Matt. 7:21-23 — deceived by Satan's counterfeit to the extent that they believe the supernaturalism in which they have become involved is a work of the Lord performed through the power of the Spirit, *when NEITHER the Lord NOR the Spirit has had anything to do with these works* (ref. Ch. VI, pp. 83-89 in this book for comments on Matt. 7:21-23).

15

THE DOOR WAS SHUT

Open, NO Man Can Shut; Shut, NO Man Can Open

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:10-13).

The Lord places a premium on *His people watching and being prepared for His return.*

THIS is the crux of the message throughout the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse:

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

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:42, 44).

The day is coming when the “master of the house” *is going to rise up and close the door* (Luke 13:25). And when the Lord closes a door, an entirely new situation comes into existence:

The Lord “openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7).

WHEN the Lord opens a door, an opportunity exists for man to act in a specific realm; and NO man can shut that door.

However, *WHEN the Lord closes a door* which He had previously opened, man’s opportunity to act in a particular realm *ceases to exist; and NO man can reopen that door.*

The parable of the ten virgins is brought to a conclusion by *the Bridegroom closing a previously opened door*. The closed door separated those in possession of the extra portion of oil from those not in possession of this extra portion, allowing the prepared to come *inside* while leaving the unprepared on *the outside*.

The closed door separated those who had availed themselves of the opportunity to acquire that referenced by the extra portion of Oil — the filling of the Holy Spirit — from those who *had NOT* availed themselves of this opportunity.

As a result, *those allowed inside* had previously been able to overcome in the spiritual warfare (for they had possessed that which was necessary to overcome), and those left on *the outside* had previously been unable to overcome in the spiritual warfare (for they *had NOT* possessed that which was necessary to overcome [see Chapter XIV in this book]).

Thus, the closed door separated two groups of individuals, one from the other:

1) *Those granted the privilege* of attending and participating in the wedding festivities (those in possession of the extra portion of Oil, the filling of the Spirit, allowing them to have previously overcome in the spiritual warfare).

2) *Those denied this privilege* (those *NOT* in possession of the extra portion of Oil, the filling of the Spirit, which had left them in *NO* position to overcome).

The Bridegroom Came

The Bridegroom departed immediately preceding the beginning of the present dispensation. He ascended into heaven to “prepare a place” *in the Father’s house* for those who are to ascend the throne and reign as co-heirs with Him during the coming age.

His departure into heaven to perform a present work on behalf of His future co-heirs is in perfect keeping with God’s purpose for the entire present dispensation. And the whole of the matter, in turn, is in perfect keeping with the reason for man’s very existence, the purpose for man’s creation in the beginning.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2, 3).

At Christ’s first coming He paid the price for man’s redemption on Calvary’s cross. A change then occurred in God’s dispensational dealings with man. The house of Israel had previously been left desolate; and very near the beginning of that time (fifty-five days after Christ had left the house desolate [Matt. 23:38; 26:1, 2; Acts 2:1ff; cf. Lev. 23:15, 16]), God called into existence and began to deal with a new household which was neither Jewish nor Gentile.

Individuals redeemed on the basis of Christ’s sacrificial work at Calvary, from among both Jew and Gentile, formed an entirely new creation. This was the “one new man” *in Christ*, forming a new household within God’s dispensational dealings (cf. Matt. 23:38; 24:42-51; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15).

And Christ is presently in heaven performing a work on behalf of those within this household — preparing a place for them, which, first and foremost, would have to do with His work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, on behalf of Christians (cf. John 13:4-12; Heb. 4:14-16; I John 1:6-2:2).

The present dispensation and all events connected with this dispensation — beginning with the house of Israel being left desolate — result from Israel’s rejection of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 21:33-44).

Israel has been set aside while God removes from the Gentiles “a people for his name” *to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*

Those who were “not a people” *have NOW become* “the people of God” (Eph. 2:12; I Peter 2:10 [although believing Jews are included within this “one new man,” Gentiles are singled out in these verses because “the one new man” is taken mainly from among the Gentiles — from those who, before being removed from the Gentiles, had been “aliens...having no hope, and without God in the world”]).

God has reserved unto Himself two days, two thousand years, to deal with a new household in view of His Son’s coming rule from the heavens over the earth; and the Son’s present ministry

in heaven on behalf of those in this household is with the same end in view.

Christ's departure into heaven to "prepare a place" for His co-heirs *MUST* be looked upon as *a Divine work with a view to the Messianic Era* (though, in reality, everything in Scripture, save parts of the closing two and one-half chapters of Scripture [Rev. 20b-22], either moves toward or deals with this era).

The word "prepare" refers to *making ready for something out ahead*, which in this case, *could ONLY* have to do with preparations for the Messianic Era (*cf.* Matt. 3:3; Mark 14:15, 16). And in this respect, Christ is presently in heaven performing a present work for those who are to ascend the throne with Him *in THAT coming day*.

Preparing a place for Christians in John 14:2, 3 is often erroneously thought of in the sense of a present construction of the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem though is *a city within the Father's house which was brought into existence either prior to or during the days of Abraham* (Heb. 11:16), *NOT* the Father's house (note the expression "all things are ready" in Matt. 22:4, which refers to a time prior to the existence of the Church and would necessitate the new Jerusalem having been completed *at THAT time*).

God's house includes everything under His sovereign control, and a *place* is being prepared by Christ for Christians within the sphere of His control. The words "many mansions" (John 14:2, KJV) are somewhat misleading in this respect and should literally be translated "abiding places."

Christ is the appointed "heir of all things," and Christians are being invited to jointly realize this inheritance with Him (Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17). Christ will occupy His Own throne during that day, *and overcoming Christians will sit with Him on this throne* (Rev. 3:21).

These are the things which are in view in John 14:1-3. The "abiding places" which He has gone away to prepare are places with Him, positions with Him, in the coming kingdom.

These are *abiding places* within the Father's house, within the sphere of God's sovereign control of matters as they pertain to this earth; and in that coming day *ALL of this will be under the authority and control of the One Who has been appointed Heir, along with His co-heirs*.

Overcoming Christians will dwell in the new Jerusalem, but they will occupy their place in the kingdom with Christ, seated with Him upon His throne.

The Son's present preparatory work in heaven not only anticipates but it demands *His return to receive His servants* (the word "receive" in John 14:3 is a translation of the Greek word *paralambano*. The literal thought is "to receive alongside [as companions].") This is the same word translated "taken" in Matt. 24:40, 41 [ref. Chapter X in this book].

Individuals are being saved today with a view to the coming kingdom; and Christ's present work, being performed on behalf of these individuals, is with the same end in view. It is with a view to receiving them alongside (as companions) to occupy the place He is presently preparing, making ready.

Though man may ignore Christ's return, put that event far from him, *Christ WILL one day return, just as He said. THEN, one door which is now open will be closed FOREVER.*

(Both the Spirit and the Son are presently performing works on behalf of Christians. And both are related works, having the same end in view, which will be realized during that future millennial day.

The Spirit is in the world performing a work having to do with His primary mission during the present dispensation — *the search for and acquisition of a bride for the Son* [Gen. 24:1ff]. And the Son is in heaven performing a work for *the bride whom the Spirit is acquiring* [John 13:4-12].

And the end of the matter is seen in the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.)

The Wedding Festivities

The word "marriage" (Matt. 25:10) should literally be understood as *marriage festivities* or *wedding festivities*. And festivities of this nature could either precede or follow the actual marriage.

Within the framework of that to which these festivities refer in Christendom (seen in Rev. 19:7-9), "the marriage" itself, as seen in the Book of Revelation, will still *be future at this time*.

Thus, the reference *can ONLY be to festivities preceding the marriage*.

The same is true in a previous parable, the parable of the King preparing festivities for the marriage of His Son, in Matt. 22:2-14 (another picture of the same thing seen in vv. 10-12 of the parable of the ten virgins). In this parable, preparations were made for the festivities, having to do with a banquet.

As previously seen, the festivities referenced in both of these parables (Matt. 22:2-14; 25:1-13) have to do with that seen in Rev. 19:7-9, “the marriage [marriage festivities] of the Lamb.” And the context of these festivities in the Book of Revelation clearly shows that these festivities will precede the actual marriage.

(The marriage of the Lamb itself is a legal transaction between the Father and His Son, and it will take place as a result of the judgments which will occur through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five — judgments which will be completed *ONLY AFTER* Christ returns and destroys Gentile world power.

The marriage festivities though occur in heaven immediately preceding Christ’s return.

Once all of the judgments seen through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass, *the marriage will have occurred*. The bride, at this point in time, *will have become the Lamb’s wife*.)

One should be careful at this point to avoid interpreting Scripture in the light of marriage customs in the Western World, or even at times in the East, during modern times. Marriage in the East during ancient times (and even in many instances during modern times) was performed through a legal transaction.

Examples of Eastern marriage customs in this respect can be seen in Jacob’s marriage to both Leah and Rachel and in Boaz’s marriage to Ruth.

Jacob contracted with Laban to work seven years for his daughter, Rachel. At the conclusion of the seven years, Rachel, within Jacob’s thinking, became his wife, for the terms of the contract had been fulfilled (Gen. 29:18-21).

A seven-day festival was then held (*cf.* vv. 22, 27), but at the end of the first evening of the festival Laban tricked Jacob by giving him Leah, the firstborn, rather than Rachel. And Jacob didn’t know until the next morning that he had been deceived.

Then, to acquire Rachel as his wife, for whom he had already worked seven years, he had to first fulfill Leah's week (that is, complete the week-long wedding festival) and then agree to serve Laban an additional seven years. Jacob fulfilled Leah's week, and Laban then gave him Rachel as his wife also with the understanding that he would work seven additional years (vv. 23-28).

Thus, the actual marriage ceremony is seen being performed two completely different ways in the passage (Gen. 29:20-30):

1) In Jacob's marriage to Leah, festivities followed the marriage contract being fulfilled (working seven years for Laban), with the marriage having occurred preceding the festivities.

2) In Jacob's subsequent marriage to Rachel (seven days later), festivities occurred before the marriage, with the marriage occurring before the marriage contract had been fulfilled (working seven additional years for Laban).

Then, in the Book of Ruth, Boaz married Ruth through fulfilling the requirements of a kinsman-redeemer. He redeemed a previously sold inheritance at the gate of Bethlehem, *which also involved taking Ruth as his wife to satisfy an Israeli law concerning widows.*

A nearer kinsman than Boaz was first afforded opportunity to redeem the inheritance, but since redemption also involved taking Ruth as his wife, he was unable to fulfill the part of a kinsman-redeemer. This left Boaz free to act in this capacity; and the marriage itself was performed within the legal, redemptive ceremony before ten elders at the gate of the city (Ruth 4:1ff).

Note that *the brides were NOT present* in either Jacob's two dealings with Laban or in Boaz's dealings with the elders at the gate of Bethlehem. The marriages in all three instances occurred through legal transactions which involved fulfilling certain requirements — *work* in Jacob's case, and *redemption of a piece of property* in Boaz's case.

With these things in mind, one should be able to clearly see that there is a sharp distinction in Scripture between *a marriage* on the one hand and *the wedding festivities* on the other.

Biblical typology clearly reveals that the actual marriage between Christ and His bride *will occur ONLY after He has redeemed the inheritance*, which, as seen in the Book of Revelation, is performed through the judgments brought to pass when all the seals of the seven-sealed scroll have been broken.

The marriage itself will be part of a fulfilled legal transaction between the Father and the Son. And that which is in view in Matt. 22:2-14; 25:10-12; Rev. 19:7-9 *can ONLY have to do with the wedding festivities* preceding the completion of all the legal requirements, preceding the completion of all the judgments which will occur through the breaking of the seals on the scroll (the title deed to the inheritance, the earth) — judgment which will be completed *ONLY after Christ returns and destroys Gentile world power, seen following the wedding festivities at the end of Revelation chapter nineteen.*

(For additional information on this subject, refer to Chapters VIII, IX, XIX, XXX in the author's book, *The Time of the End.*)

The wedding festivities attendant the marriage of God's Son to His bride occur in heaven *following* events at the judgment seat but *preceding* Christ's return to the earth with His angels at the end of the Tribulation. Decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat of Christ will reveal the identity of those privileged to enter into these festivities. And the festivities will occur immediately preceding Christ's return to complete His redemptive work having to do with the inheritance (a redemptive work, performed through judgment [through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll], which will bring the marriage to pass).

The parable of the ten virgins moves beyond the judgment seat into the festivities immediately preceding the marriage.

At that time *a door will be closed*. Individuals on one side of the door will be allowed to attend the festivities, while individuals on the other side will be denied admittance. *And once this door has been closed, those left on the outside will have missed the marriage festivities FOREVER. These festivities will occur ONCE, NEVER to be repeated.*

(The words "marriage" and "wedding" in Matt. 22:2-12; 25:10; Rev. 19:7, 9 are translations of the Greek word *gamos*. Sometimes in these

verses this word appears in a singular form, and other times it appears in a plural form. In either instance, contextually, the reference is always to festivities attendant the marriage, not to the marriage itself per se.

The singular form appears in Matt. 22:8, 10-12; Rev. 19:7, 9; and the plural form appears in Matt. 22:2-4, 9; 25:10.)

Afterward

Man is repeatedly warned in Scripture concerning the fact that *opportunities do NOT exist forever*. The “accepted time,” the “day of salvation,” is *TODAY*. *Man does NOT know* “what shall be *on the morrow*” (II Cor. 6:1, 2; James 4:13, 14).

Redeemed man has been commanded:

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate” (Luke 13:24a).

He is then warned:

“...for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:24b).

“Strive” is a translation of the word *agonizomai* in the Greek text. This is the same word used in I Cor. 9:25 (translated “striveth”) and is the Greek word from which we derive our English word “agonize.” The thought behind the use of this word is to strain every muscle as one seeks to accomplish the task at hand.

(An intensified form of this word appears in Jude 3 [*epagonizomai*] pertaining to *straining every muscle of one’s being in the present spiritual warfare as it relates to apostasy on the one hand and “the faith” on the other*.)

“The faith” is an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom in the New Testament.

Refer to Chapter II in the author’s book, *Jude*.)

In Luke 13:24 entrance through a strait gate is in view, while in I Cor. 9:25 running a race is in view.

The word “strait” refers to a narrow, constricted way, pointing to the difficulty involved in entering through the gate.

And the same thought permeates the race beginning in I Cor. 9:24. One has to do with a strait gate leading unto “life” (*cf.* Matt.

7:14), and the other with a race leading to “a crown.”

Both though point out ahead to the same thing — *life in the coming age, occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom.*

This is the matter which the rich, young ruler had in mind when he approached Jesus and asked:

“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16).

The words “eternal life” in the English text are misleading. The literal translation, derived from the context, should be “life for the age.” The rich, young ruler was *NOT* asking how he could receive eternal life; *NOR* did Jesus respond to his question in this respect.

The same accounts in Mark’s and Luke’s gospels clearly reveal that the rich, young ruler was thinking of *life in the coming kingdom (which was the message being proclaimed by Jesus and His disciples to the nation of Israel), NOT eternal life.*

Note Mark 10:17, 30 and Luke 18:18, 30. The question concerning obtaining life is asked; and Jesus, alluding to this question, refers to life in the “world [‘age’] to come,” *which of course has to do with the Messianic Era rather than eternal life.*

Further, the rich, young ruler was asking about *inheriting life* (Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18). Eternal life is *NOT* inherited. Rather, it is a *free gift*, which, unlike an inheritance, *CANNOT* be forfeited.

The *ONLY* type life in Scripture associated with an inheritance is *life in the coming kingdom.*

Jesus said that “a rich man shall hardly [‘with difficulty’] enter into the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt. 19:23). There’s *NOTHING* whatsoever “difficult” about receiving eternal life; *NOR* is “striving” involved. Eternal life, a *free gift*, is something which the rich and the poor alike can acquire by simply reaching out and taking.

It would be *completely out of character* with the gospel of grace to say *that it is more difficult for a rich man to be saved than it is for any other type individual.* Entrance into the kingdom though (“the kingdom of the heavens,” the coming rule of the heavens over the earth) is something altogether different. *Discipleship* is involved (cf. Luke 14:26, 27; John 8:31; 15:8), and riches can become a great hindrance in this realm (Matt. 13:22).

(There is actually no word for “eternity” in the Greek language of the New Testament. The Greeks thought in the sense of “ages” [aeons of time], and eternity for them was an endless succession of aeons.

Aionios is the Greek word normally translated “eternal” in English versions of Scripture [this was the word used by the rich, young ruler in Matt. 19:16]. *Aionios* is the adjective equivalent of the noun *aion* [meaning, ‘period of time,’ ‘age’], which is used innumerable times in the New Testament, often translated “world” [cf. Matt. 12:32; 13:22, 49; Heb. 1:2; Heb. 13:8; a plural form of the word is used in the last two references].

Mark 10:30 provides an example of both *aion* and *aionios* used together: “...and in the world [*aion*] to come eternal [*aionios*] life.” Clearly, from both the text and context, “eternal life” CANNOT be in view.

On the other hand, *aionios* is used at times in the New Testament in the sense of “eternal.” This use though is derived from textual considerations, not from the meaning of the word itself.

Aionios, for example, is the word used in John 3:16, where the type life referenced could only be “eternal life” [cf. vv. 17, 18], derived through *faith in Christ*.)

The Lord in Luke 13:24 refers to individuals who will seek to “enter in at the strait gate” and will be unable to so do.

The reason for this is explained in the verse which follows (v. 25), and both verses together constitute one of the best parallel passages in Scripture on the parable of the ten virgins.

Individuals are commanded to exert every effort, strain every muscle of their being, in an effort to enter (into life) through the narrow, constricted way while the door is still open. The day is coming, *on the morrow, when the door will be FOREVER closed; and at that time such an opportunity will NO longer exist.*

There is *NO such thing* today as a Christian seeking to run the race or enter in at the strait gate and being unable to achieve the goal. *The door is presently open, and the Lord does NOT command His people to accomplish tasks which they CANNOT accomplish.*

However, the day is coming when *the Master of the house will rise up and close the door* (v. 25); and once that door has been closed, *there will then be NO such thing* as a Christian ever running the race or entering in at the strait gate. *The day of opportunity for man to act in this realm will be PAST, NEVER to be repeated.*

I Know You Not

The Lord is *omniscient*. *He knows EVERYONE and EVERYTHING.*

Yet, in the parable of the ten virgins, the Lord plainly declared that *He did NOT know those on the outside of the closed door seeking admittance to the wedding festivities.*

A similar statement is recorded in Matt. 7:21-23. Here the Lord declared that certain individuals will appear in His presence “in that day” who will seek admittance into the kingdom of the heavens on the basis of an intimate association with Him through their previously performed miraculous works.

The Lord though will say:

“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [‘lawlessness’]” (v. 23).

“That day” is the time when those presently commanded to enter in at “the strait gate” appear before the Lord in judgment, with a view to entrance into the kingdom (*cf.* vv. 13, 14, 21, 22); and as evident from both the text and the context, the scene depicted in Matt. 7:21-23 has to do with Christians before the judgment seat.

It is evident from the text that “many” are going to appear before the Lord “in that day” who had sought to enter in at the strait gate through a pseudo-intimate association with the Lord.

In that day it will be revealed that they had become involved in miraculous works, supposedly performed in the Lord’s name; but the Lord will reveal to them that *He had NOTHING to do with these works.*

The Lord’s statements, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23) and “I know you not” (Matt. 25:12) would have to be looked upon as *relative statements* — *relative to the matter at hand.* (Actually, since the Lord is omniscient, He *could NOT* make such a statement to anyone without it being *relative*.)

To *the unsaved*, it would be relative to eternal life; to *the saved*, it would be relative to matters having to do with the kingdom.)

In Matt. 7:23, the Lord’s negative response pertains to two things:

- 1) Entrance into the kingdom (vv. 21, 23).
- 2) Miraculous works (v. 22).

The Lord will state that *He had NOTHING to do with these works*, and He will refuse to recognize those involved in such works *relative to entrance into the kingdom*. Through these works, they, in actuality, will have entered in at the wide gate, the broad way (v. 14); and a revelation of this fact, in the Lord's presence, will result in their being denied a position with Him in the kingdom.

In Matt. 25:12 the Lord's statement *pertains to the unpreparedness of the five foolish virgins, with the wedding festivities in view*. The foolish virgins were *NOT properly prepared* to attend these festivities.

Comparing the parable of the ten virgins with the parable of the wedding feast in Matt. 22:2-14, *an absence of the extra supply of oil* shows unpreparedness in one while *an absence of the wedding garment* shows unpreparedness in the other.

The connection is evident. A Christian *NOT filled with the Holy Spirit*, depicted by the five foolish virgins without the extra portion of Oil, is in *NO* position to perform righteous acts (works) which make up the wedding garment.

Thus, different facets of the same truth are taught in both parables. The absence of that depicted by the extra portion of Oil *will result* in Christians appearing before the Lord improperly clothed. They *will NOT possess wedding garments, appearing naked* in the Lord's presence (*cf.* Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 3:18; 19:7-9).

Consequently, because of their improper dress, *the Lord will NOT know them relative to entrance into the wedding festivities*.

The words for "know" in the Greek text of Matt. 7:23 and Matt. 25:12 are interestingly different. *Ginosko*, pointing to one type knowledge, is used in Matt. 7:23; and *oida*, pointing to another type knowledge, is used in Matt. 25:12.

Ginosko refers to *a type knowledge gained through experience. That is, one has an intimate relationship with Christ through the experience of following Him, keeping His commandments* (as in I John 2:3, 4).

This is the word Paul used in Phil. 3:10:

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..."

The end result of such knowledge, such a relationship with Christ, would be attaining “unto the resurrection [out-resurrection] of the dead” (v. 11).

Oida, on the other hand, refers to a *type knowledge gained apart from experience, an absolute knowledge*. This is the type knowledge we possess concerning various facts set forth in Scripture:

“...we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2)

“...believe on the name of the Son of God; that *ye may know* that ye have eternal life...” (1 John 5:13).

In Matt. 7:23, Christ’s use of the word *ginosko* clearly reveals His nonassociation with the miraculous works which had been performed. Those performing these works had been carrying on activities completely outside the sphere of any type intimate relationship with Christ, though claiming such a relationship.

Thus, responding to their question (which expects a positive response the way it is worded in the Greek text [they actually thought these miraculous works were being performed through the power of the Holy Spirit, in Christ’s name]; *ref.* Chapter VI in this book), Christ was very careful to show, by the use of the word *ginosko*, that He had *absolutely NOTHING to do with these works*.

Today, near the close of the present dispensation, the same segment of Christendom manifesting miraculous works (such as those seen in Matt. 7:22) is also proclaiming a counterfeit message relative to the filling of the Holy Spirit, possessing the extra supply of Oil (*ref.* Chapter XIV in this book). In fact, this counterfeit work of the Holy Spirit is *the heart of their message*.

The entire matter *can ONLY* be a work of Satan within the Laodicean state of Christendom at the conclusion of the present dispensation, producing further corruption and deterioration. It is an end result of the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal very early in the dispensation (Matt. 13:33).

Deceived Christians caught up in this work of Satan are becoming involved in a manifestation of supernatural powers

emanating from the demonic world, believing that these things are being done through the power of the Holy Spirit and are of the Lord. They are further being deceived into receiving a pseudo spiritual work in their lives, leaving them with a pseudo preparation for the spiritual warfare at hand; and Christians becoming involved in this activity can only experience *present defeat* (Satan cannot cast himself out, he cannot defeat himself in the spiritual warfare [Matt. 12:26]) and *future rejection* (“I never knew you”).

Thus, Jesus in His choice of words in Matt. 7:23 was very careful to show that *there was NO intimate relationship on His part with the ones performing these miraculous works.*

His statement in Matt. 25:12 though is different. The use of the word *oida* rather than *ginosko* reveals knowledge of a fact apart from any reference to experience. Though experiential knowledge would have been involved through acquiring the extra portion of Oil, there is *NO claim* made by those outside the door to such an experience (as in Matt. 7:21-23). Thus, the Lord deemed the simple, absolute statement as given to be the proper response to those requesting that the door be opened.

The door was shut, and the Bridegroom did NOT recognize those on the other side of the door as belonging to the group allowed to attend the marriage festivities.

They were thus left in a place described in the closing parable of the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse as the “outer darkness” (25:30; cf. Matt. 22:11-13).

That is, they were denied entrance into the lighted banqueting hall where the festivities were being held and were left in a place of darkness on the outside, with *closed doors* separating the two places (“outer darkness” is discussed in Chapter XXI of this book).

Watch Therefore

In I Thess. 5:6-10, Christians are spoken of as occupying one of two positions:

Christians either “watch” or they, like the world, “sleep.”

Watching is associated with the “day,” being “sober,” and being properly equipped for the warfare at hand (v. 8).

Sleeping, on the other hand, is associated with the “night” and “drunkenness,” wherein there is no proper preparation for the warfare (v. 7).

In His message to the Church in Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6), Christ said, “If...thou shalt not *watch*, I will come on thee as a *thief*...” (v. 3).

There is *NOTHING* good revealed in Scripture about the appearance of a thief. Removal or destruction of property and even death follow in his wake (John 10:10), which illustrates *EXACTLY* what lies ahead for unfaithful Christians to whom Christ will one day appear after this fashion (cf. Luke 19:24; James 5:19, 20).

The writer of Hebrews stated:

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:27, 28).

The preceding two verses parallel one another. The appointment with death (v. 27) parallels Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary (v. 28); and the coming judgment of Christians (v. 27) parallels the thought of looking for Christ and a salvation accompanying His return (v. 28).

Christians have already kept the appointment with death (v. 27). It is a vicarious death. Christ has kept the appointment in their stead. He has died in their place.

Then, at the judgment seat of Christ (v. 27), all things will be revealed.

Those who watched, looked for Christ (v. 28), will realize the salvation of their souls.

Those though who didn’t watch, look for Him, will suffer the loss of their souls (this is the salvation in view throughout Hebrews, *NOT* the salvation which we presently possess).

The exhortation is to “*Watch*,” and it is accompanied by a *warning*.

The Lord will return at an unexpected time, and *servants NOT watching will “suffer loss” and occupy a place with the unfaithful outside closed doors.*

16

TO RECEIVE A KINGDOM

Introduced in Genesis, Realized in Revelation

“For the kingdom of the heavens is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods (Matt. 25:14).

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12).

The parable of the talents presents an overall scope of the present dispensation, with a particular emphasis on events surrounding the Lord’s return and the kingdom which follows. This parable covers events extending from the time of Christ’s first coming to the time of His return and is one of the most comprehensive parables in Scripture dealing with the purpose for and scope of the present dispensation.

The parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-27 are *essentially the same, though certain internal differences exist.*

Jesus gave the parable of the pounds to His disciples in a single discourse near the close of His earthly ministry while still in Jericho, before going up to Jerusalem. He gave the parable at this time in order to dispel thoughts which His disciples had concerning the kingdom being established in days immediately ahead (Luke 19:11ff).

And the parable of the talents was given to His disciples in a larger discourse after they had been to Jerusalem in order to provide additional light upon the accompanying three parables.

The parable of the pounds was given *preceding Christ’s entry into Jerusalem as the nation’s King, anticipating His rejection.*

And the parable of the talents was given *following His entry and rejection, only two days before the Jewish people crucified their Messiah (Matt. 26:1, 2).*

The overall framework of the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is *the same*.

A Nobleman (Christ) called His servants (Christians), delivered unto them His goods (His business), and commissioned them concerning the use of these goods.

He then departed into a far country to receive a kingdom (into heaven to receive the kingdom presently in possession of the incumbent ruler, Satan), leaving His servants with the promise that He would return (as King, in possession of the kingdom).

During the interim, between the time of the Nobleman's departure and return, His servants were to exercise faithfulness to the responsibility with which they had been entrusted.

Then the day finally arrived when the Nobleman returned, as He had promised. And, at that time, His servants were called before Him to give an account.

Those servants who had exercised faithfulness in their calling were commended and then rewarded by being placed in positions of power and authority in the kingdom which the Nobleman had acquired during the time of His absence.

Those servants exercising unfaithfulness in their calling though experienced rebuke, rejection, and chastisement. NO positions in the Nobleman's kingdom awaited them.

The main difference in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is the manner in which the Nobleman delivered His goods to His servants prior to His departure.

In the parable of the talents, these goods were delivered to individual servants on the basis of their ability. Some servants received more talents than other servants, though every servant received at least one talent (Matt. 25:14, 15).

In the parable of the pounds though, each servant received an identical amount. There were ten servants and ten pounds, and each servant received one pound (Luke 19:13; cf. vv. 16-20).

"The talents" and "the pounds" have to do with *monetary units of exchange*.

The reference is to weighed amounts of precious metals such as gold or silver. Coins of varying sizes would be one form of either.

The household servants were left in possession of the Noble-

man's wealth; and they were to use this wealth in carrying out their Master's commission during the time of His absence, anticipating that day when He would return, having received the kingdom.

Just As, Even As

In the Greek text, the parable of the talents begins with the words *Hosper gar*.

Hosper is an adverb used as a connecting particle, and *gar* is a postpositive conjunction. When brought over into the English text, *gar* would precede *hosper* in the translation, as shown in the KJV text: "For [*Gar*] *the kingdom of heaven is as [hosper]...*" (v. 14).

Note that the words "the kingdom of heaven is" are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek text. These are words supplied by the translators, undoubtedly attempting to convey the thought expressed by the word *hosper* in order to help the reader better understand the subject matter of the text about to follow.

This particle, which could be better translated "just as," or "even as," connects that which follows with that which precedes. It connects the parable of the talents with the parable of the ten virgins.

The parable of the talents is "just as" the parable of the ten virgins. Both deal with the same thing. They form different facets of the same subject matter.

Since the parable of the ten virgins opened with "Then shall 'the kingdom of heaven'..." (v. 1), the translators, apparently on the basis of the thought conveyed by *hosper* (v. 14), attempting to show the inseparable connection between the two parables, used these same words to open the parable of the talents.

A better translation to adequately bring out the force of *Hosper gar* would be, "For it is just as..." "It" would refer back to the preceding parable, with attention called to the parable which is about to follow being "just as" the parable which has preceded.

Thus, a study of the parable of the talents will provide additional light on the parable of the ten virgins.

Something often overlooked in the parable of the ten virgins is the fact that this parable, "*just as*" the parable of the talents, has to do with a Householder and servants in the house.

Note that the parable of the ten virgins continues the thought from the parable of the Householder and His servant (24:45-51), which is itself a continuation of the thought from the immediately preceding parable concerning a house being broken up (vv. 40-44).

In the parable of the ten virgins, the Householder is referred to as the Bridegroom, revealing another facet of Biblical teaching concerning the Master of the house — a facet of truth pertaining to the necessity of the Nobleman possessing a wife when He takes the kingdom and reigns (*cf.* Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24).

In the parable of the Householder and His servant and the parable of the ten virgins, the Master of the house is presented simply as absent, followed by His coming.

There is *NOTHING* directly recorded about His one-time presence and departure, as in the parable of the talents. Such a previous presence and departure though *MUST* be understood, for in the parable of the Householder and His servant the Master of the house had previously placed His servant in charge of the house and commissioned him concerning responsibilities in the house (v. 45). The Householder's "coming" (v. 46) would thus be *His return*, as in the parable of the talents (v. 19).

The *SAME* is true in the parable of the ten virgins. The Bridegroom, Who is *the Householder* from the previous parable, or *the Man* in the following parable, is absent.

He had previously been present with His servants (the ten virgins); but He departed into the far country, and His servants were to conduct their activities during His time of absence after a manner which would *NOT ONLY* be in keeping with that which He had commanded prior to His departure *BUT*, as well, after a manner which would be in keeping with their faithfully awaiting and anticipating His return (*cf.* Heb. 9:28).

The parable of the ten virgins presents proper preparation for going forth to meet the Bridegroom (proper preparation as one anticipates and awaits the Bridegroom's return).

Possessing the extra portion of Oil, being filled with the Holy Spirit, is the CENTRAL issue at hand.

The CENTRAL issue in the parable of the talents though is faithfulness to the Householder's charge concerning the proper use of His goods

during His time of absence. *NOTHING* is stated about the filling of the Spirit, as in the previous parable.

These two parables teach two facets of a central truth:

Properly carrying out responsibility requires proper preparation.

That is, a proper use of the Master's goods during the time of His absence *necessitates that one be properly prepared.*

In this respect, *being filled with the Spirit (as in the parable of the ten virgins) and being busy about the Lord's business (as in the parable of the talents) go hand-in-hand.*

The *ONLY* Christians really in a position to carry on the Lord's business in its fullness *are those filled with the Spirit.*

Thus, the sequence of the parables themselves is significant.

God has given His Word and the Holy Spirit to Christians *in order to properly equip them for NOT ONLY the battle at hand BUT also the task at hand.* Adherence to the command, "...be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18, *MUST* precede one's faithful fulfillment of the command, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

The parable of the ten virgins (apart from the parable of the talents) actually though moves beyond the thought of being filled with the Spirit and reveals *a purpose for this filling.*

This parable reveals activity among the Householder's servants, in complete accord with the same thing seen in the succeeding parable of the talents. Such is revealed by *the ten virgins going forth with their lamps burning.* But *ONLY* the five virgins in possession of the extra supply of Oil were in *a position to carry out such activity in the light of the Bridegroom's return (ref. Chapter XIV in this book).*

And in relation to such activity, both parables deal with faithful and unfaithful servants. There are five wise virgins and five foolish virgins in one parable, and there are two faithful servants and one unfaithful servant in the other parable, which is in perfect keeping with that seen in the opening two parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.

It is within a framework of faithfulness to the Householder's charge to His servants concerning activity during His time of absence (which involves the servants being properly prepared), along with that which occurs when the Householder returns, *that the parable of the talents is "just as" the parable of the ten virgins.*

Reason for Departure

The Nobleman, Christ, revealed His approaching departure to His disciples on more than one occasion (cf. Mark 2:19, 20; Luke 5:34, 35; 19:12; John 14:2, 3).

In accord with Old Testament prophecy, He was to return to the place from whence he had come (back to heaven) and remain there for a specified period of time (2,000 years). This was occasioned by the people of Israel rejecting and crucifying their Messiah.

At His first coming, Christ:

“...came unto his own [‘own things’ (neuter pl. in the Gk. text)], and his own [‘own people’ (masculine pl. in the Gk. text)] received him not” (John 1:11).

“His own things” refer to *those things which were rightfully His: the Davidic throne, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.*; and “His own people” refer to *the Jewish people, His brethren according to the flesh.*

Christ suffered at the hands of His Own people *because of His Own things*, things which rightfully belonged to Him.

ALL the sufferings of Christ, after some fashion, were associated with the “things” to which He came, by the people to whom He came.

1) Rejection by His Own

Jesus was born “King of the Jews,” He presented Himself to Israel as the nation’s “King” (Matt. 2:2; 21:1-11), and over His head at the time of His death the accusation read:

“This is Jesus the King of the Jews” (Matt. 27:37b).

His Kingship was at the center of the accusation which the Jews presented when they took Jesus to Pilate:

“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King” (Luke 23:2).

Pilate, after questioning Jesus and listening to what He had to say relative to this accusation, responded:

“So You are a king?” (John 18:37a, NASB).

Jesus, in response, said:

“You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world...” (John 18:37b, NASB).

Jesus though had clearly stated to Pilate that His kingdom was *NOT* “of this world,” referring to the present world system under Satan; and from this statement Pilate apparently understood that even though a King other than Caesar may have been present, He posed no threat to the Roman Empire, which was “of this world.”

Thus, Pilate found “in him no fault at all” (John 18:36-38).

Pilate brought Jesus forth to the Jewish people as “the King of the Jews,” seeking to release Him. The people though cried out for the release of Barabbas, an imprisoned robber and murderer, rather than Jesus. Pilate then released Barabbas and scourged Jesus (John 18:39, 40; *cf.* Matt. 27:26).

The Roman soldiers were then allowed to array Christ as a mock King, and Pilate, in this fashion, presented Christ once again to the Jewish people with the words:

“Behold the man [the man arrayed in this ignominious fashion (a crown of thorns and a purple robe) as the King of the Jews]!” (John 19:5).

The religious leaders of Israel, seeing Christ arrayed in this mock fashion as their King, then cried out for His crucifixion. Pilate though continued to seek His release (John 19:6ff); and after another conversation with Christ, Pilate brought Him forth to the Jewish people again, with the words:

“Behold your King!” (John 19:14b).

The Jewish people though continued to cry out for His crucifixion. This prompted the question by Pilate:

“Shall I crucify your King?” (John 19:15a).

The chief priests responded:

“We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15b).

Their response placed Pilate in the position of having little choice but to acquiesce to their demand (*cf.* v. 12); and Pilate, though having tried to wash his hands of the matter, delivered Jesus over to be crucified (Matt. 27:24ff; John 19:16ff).

With the words, "We have no king but Caesar," the Jewish people sank to a *new low* in their long history.

They had rejected their King, they were crying out for His crucifixion; and, to effect His death after this fashion, *they were claiming allegiance to Caesar, a pagan Gentile king.*

God Himself, in the person of His Son, stood rejected in their midst. *NOT ONLY* had He been rejected, *BUT* the people were crying for His execution by crucifixion. They wanted the Man Pilate had brought forth as their King subjected to the most ignominious form of execution known to man.

Crucifixion was reserved for the worst types of slaves or criminals in the Roman world; and, because of Deut. 21:23, it was considered by the Jews as the most horrible of all forms of death:

"...he that is hanged is accursed of God."

When the Chief Priests claimed allegiance to Caesar in order to effect Christ's crucifixion, they *could NOT* have placed Israel in a position more diametrically opposed to God's purpose for calling the nation into existence.

Israel was (and remains today) *God's firstborn son*, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture (Ex. 4:12).

Israel had been called into existence to be the nation which would *NOT ONLY* rule over the Gentile nations *BUT* also reach these same nations with God's message, resulting in the nations being blessed.

Israel was to occupy this position within a theocracy.

This was the purpose for the existence of the theocracy in the Old Testament; and this was a purpose which would have been realized had Israel *NOT* rejected Christ at His first coming, delaying the realization of this purpose *UNTIL the time of His return.*

The people of Israel though had turned the whole thing around by rejecting their Messiah and placing themselves in subjection to Caesar.

There could be *NO* theocracy apart from their rejected Messiah; and those who were supposed to rule in the theocracy were *NOT ONLY* calling for Christ's crucifixion *BUT* they were subjecting themselves to the pagan ruler of the very people over which they were called into existence to rule.

2) A House Left Desolate

The pronouncement concerning Israel's desolation had been made immediately prior to Christ's crucifixion, and the entire matter of that which was about to occur had been graphically outlined eight centuries earlier by the prophet Hosea:

"When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 5:13-6:2).

The name "Ephraim" is used to collectively represent *the entire nation of Israel* (Jer. 31:9).

Ephraim in this passage is sick, wounded, and goes to the Assyrian for help (also referred to as "king Jareb," a figurative title of *the King of Assyria*).

However, the Assyrian is unable to effect a cure (v. 13).

"The Assyrian," as evident from the verses immediately following, refers to *the final subjugator of the nation of Israel* who will appear during the Tribulation.

The reference is to *Antichrist* who will arise out of a country within the territory covered by the northern segment of the old Babylonian kingdom after its four-way division following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. (Dan. 8:8, 9).

This segment of the kingdom was Assyria, and because of this the Antichrist is referred to as *an Assyrian* several places in Old Testament Scripture (cf. Isa. 10:5; 14:25; Micah 5:5). Also note in a basic Old Testament type covering the matter that the Pharaoh of Egypt during Moses' day was *an Assyrian* (Isa. 52:4).

(The Assyrians during Moses' day had previously come down and conquered the Egyptians [just as the Assyrian yet future will conquer the world]. And the Assyrians at this time were ruling Egypt [just as the Assyrian yet future will rule the world].)

Ephraim's *ONLY* help could come from the One Who had wrought the sickness, caused the wound.

It was the Lord Who had placed Ephraim in this condition. It was the Lord Who had left the house desolate.

And the final subjugator of Israel, rather than helping, will only produce a further desolation (Dan. 9:26, 27). He will be "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 12:11), bringing an already desolated house into a ravaged condition without parallel in history.

The Lord said, "I will take away, and none shall rescue him" (v. 14). Only the One Who placed Ephraim in this condition can effect deliverance.

Christ is *the One* Who pronounced desolation upon the house of Israel, and He is *the ONLY One* Who can remove Israel from this condition. Apart from the One Whom the nation rejected and crucified, Israel has *NO* hope. Apart from their Messiah, the people of Israel will remain in their present desolate condition *FOREVER*.

Deliverance though is coming, but two things MUST transpire FIRST:

1) The One Who had come, been rejected, and caused Ephraim's sickness *MUST* return to the place from whence He came ("I, even I, will tear [cause the sickness] and go away [return to heaven]"; "I will go and return to my place").

2) The people of Israel *MUST* then acknowledge their offense (their centuries of disobedience and harlotry was climaxed at Christ's first coming by the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah) and seek The Lord's face (vv. 14, 15).

(Note that Israel at Christ's first coming was already sick, as depicted centuries earlier in the first chapter of Isaiah [vv. 4ff].

And Christ, leaving the house desolate, brought this existing sickness to a new level, an intensity not heretofore existing.)

Christ has returned to heaven. He returned forty days following His resurrection, and He is going to remain in heaven *UNTIL* those who offended Him acknowledge their offense and seek His face.

The time when they will seek His face will be during "their affliction," the coming Great Tribulation (v. 15).

Though the Jewish people will call upon the Lord and seek His face prior to His return (brought about by their having *NO place to turn* other than to the Lord during the Tribulation), they will *NOT* actually acknowledge their offense *UNTIL* after He returns.

Israel's offence reached an apex and was climaxed in *His presence*, and the nation's offence, as well, will be acknowledged in *His presence* (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 3:6-8; Gen. 44:16-45:3).

The SAME scenes which witnessed events surrounding the beginning of Israel's desolation will ALSO witness events surrounding the end of Israel's desolation. The SAME scenes which witnessed Messiah's sufferings and humiliation will ALSO witness His glory and exaltation.

The Jewish people, during the time of the coming Great Tribulation, are going to seek the Lord "early" (v. 15). Under the reign of Antichrist, because of the worldwide anti-Semitism which will exist, conditions will deteriorate into a chaotic state unparalleled in the history of the human race. Conditions will become such that apart from the Lord's intervention, man would literally destroy himself (Matt. 24:21, 22; ref. Chapter V in this book).

It will be during these days that the Israelites, as the Israelites in the brickyards and fields of Egypt under the reign of the Assyrian during Moses' day (Ex. 2:23), are going to turn to and call upon the Lord.

And the Lord, as during Moses' day, is going to *hear His people, remember His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and have respect unto them* (Ex. 2:24, 25).

These things will occur "after two days," after two thousand years. It will be "in the third day," in the third one-thousand-year

period, that Israel will be raised up to live in the Lord's sight (cf. Hosea 6:2; II Peter 3:8).

The time designated by the two days covers, *NOT* the present dispensation (the two-day, the 2,000-year, Christian dispensation), *BUT* the past Jewish dispensation (the two days, the 2,000 years, extending from the birth of Abraham to the kingdom, with seven years yet to transpire).

(Note that the restoration of Israel and the restoration of the theocracy to Israel occur at the end of the Jewish dispensation [Dan. 9:24-27].

God stopped the clock [so to speak] counting time during the Jewish dispensation seven years short of completion and began to work with an entirely separate group of household servants [which are neither Jewish nor Gentile] for a dispensation — the present dispensation.

Once God has completed His work among this separate group of household servants, He will remove them from the earth and deal with them in relation to *past faithfulness, with a view to the future theocracy.*

Once this has been done, God will then turn back to Israel and complete the last seven years of the Jewish dispensation, with the kingdom being ushered in following the completion of these final seven years.)

Thus, Christ will remain in heaven *UNTIL* the full two days of the Jewish dispensation, the full two thousand years, have transpired; and at the end of this time He will return.

THEN, on the third day, the third one-thousand-year period, Israel is going to be raised up to occupy her proper place in the Lord's sight.

That is, at the end of two days, two thousand years (time in which God deals with the Jewish people [seven years required to complete the two days, the 2,000 years, are still future]), Israel is going to finally realize the reason for the nation's inception during the days of Moses almost 3,500 years ago.

Purpose for Departure

Hosea 5:13-6:2 deals with *the reason* rather than *the purpose* for Christ's departure almost two millenniums ago. *The purpose* for His departure is dealt with in other Old Testament passages.

Moses, for example, went to his brethren as their deliverer, but he was rejected. He then departed into and dwelt in the land of Midian, the far country, and remained there as a shepherd for a lengthy period of time. And prior to the day God called him to return to his brethren, he took a Gentile bride (Ex. 2:11-3:10).

Moses in Midian, between the time of his departure and return, typifies Christ in heaven, between the time of His departure and return. And as Moses was a shepherd, so is Christ a Shepherd, the Great Shepherd of the sheep; and as Moses took a Gentile bride during this time, so is Christ presently taking a Gentile bride.

This same truth can be seen in the experiences of Joseph. He went to his brethren, was rejected by his brethren, and was sold by his brethren for the price of a slave. He then found himself removed from his brethren, in Egypt, in the far country. And while in Egypt, prior to the time he was reunited with his brethren, he took a Gentile bride (Gen. 37-45).

The same truth is also set forth, though after a slightly different fashion, in the experiences of Isaac. Sarah, his mother, had died; and Abraham, his father, sent his eldest servant into Mesopotamia, to his own people, to acquire a bride for Isaac. And after the servant had completed his mission, acquiring the bride, Abraham remarried (Gen. 23-25).

This points to God sending the Holy Spirit into the world (ch. 24) following the setting aside of Israel (ch. 23) in order to acquire a bride for His Son (after Christ's return to heaven).

And, as in the type, the bride is being taken from among God's Own people (which cannot be from Israel, for the house of Israel lies desolate during this time; or Israel during this time is looked upon as Sarah [Gen. 23] and Lazarus [John 11] — *dead*).

The restoration of Israel will occur, as in the type, *AFTER* the bride has been acquired for God's Son (Gen. 25:1ff), *AFTER two days* (John 11:6, 7).

1) A Necessary Interval

Israel, at Christ's first coming, rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens. The nation of Israel, *a people in possession of both earthly and heavenly promises and blessings, though they had experi-*

entially known *ONLY* the earthly, rejected the heavenly. They spurned the offer to occupy positions in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom; and once the house was left desolate, it was necessary for God to call a new people into existence to be the recipient of this offer.

And this is *EXACTLY* what has occurred. This is the reason for the existence of the “one new man” in Christ, who is neither Jew nor Gentile (cf. Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:14, 15).

The purpose for Christ’s departure into heaven, as brought out in the parable of the pounds, is to receive a kingdom from His Father (Luke 19:12).

A kingdom though, as also brought out in the parable of the pounds, necessitates rulers to govern affairs in the realm covered by the kingdom (Luke 19:16-19). And God is presently taking two days, two millenniums (the present dispensation, while the house of Israel lies desolate), to call out these rulers.

(Note in connection with Christ going into heaven to receive a kingdom — while the Holy Spirit is presently in the world calling out the future rulers in the kingdom [synonymous with His search for a bride for God’s Son] — He, prior to receiving the kingdom, is presently performing a work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of His prospective co-heirs, His prospective bride.

For additional information on this subject, refer to Chapters XIII and XV in this book, pp. 204-206, under the sub-heading, “Wash Thyself,” and pp. 228-231, under the heading, “The Bridegroom Came.”)

The rulers whom God is presently calling out will reign as co-regents with Christ, as His bride, His consort queen.

And as in the type set forth in Genesis chapter twenty-four, *the bride is being taken from among His Own people*. God has sent the Holy Spirit to this earth to acquire a bride for His Son from among Christians, His Own people, who “in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God” (I Peter 2:10).

As in the original type, Eve was removed from Adam’s body to reign with him as consort queen (Gen. 1:28; 2:21, 22).

Eve was NOT all of Adam’s body, ONLY a small part; and this SAME relationship between body and bride MUST exist relative to the bride being called out for the Second Man, the Last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-50).

That which is true of the type is also true of the antitype, and conversely; One is an exact replica of the other. The bride of Christ WILL be, the bride of Christ MUST be, the body of Christ in the SAME sense that Eve was the body of Adam.

Eve was bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23); Eve was the body of Adam, but she was NOT all of his body.

ALL of the saved during the present dispensation form the body, BUT NOT ALL of the saved will form the bride. As in the type of Eve or Rebekah, the bride will be removed from the body, from the saved, from among the Lord's Own people.

This same truth is also taught in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds. *NOT ALL* of the servants in these parables occupied positions of power and authority when their Master returned, having received the kingdom. Positions of this nature were reserved for *the faithful*.

That is to say, *NOT ALL* Christians will occupy positions with Christ when He returns, having received the kingdom. Positions of this nature, as co-heirs with Him, seated on the throne as consort queen, *are reserved for the faithful*.

2) A Necessary Departure

"The kingdom of the world," presently in possession and control of Satan and his angels, will one day *become* "the kingdom of our Lord" (Rev. 11:15, ASV). This kingdom though is part of a realm ruled by a far greater Power than the incumbent powers and authorities. It is a province within the kingdom of God, a kingdom covering the entire universe.

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19; cf. I Chron. 19:11, 12).

Christ returning to heaven to receive the kingdom from His Father returns to the One in possession and control of everything in the entire universe.

Satan presently holds possession and control of a province "under" *God's absolute, sovereign possession and control*, though he has disqualified himself; and he will continue to hold his present position until Christ receives the kingdom from His Father, for a

principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler *MUST* hold his position until he is actually replaced.

But God *will NOT* allow conditions as they currently exist to continue in a part of His kingdom indefinitely.

God has told His Son:

“Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool” (Ps. 110:1).

God is awaiting that day when the present powers and authorities are put down and the Son receives possession and control of the kingdom (Ps. 110:2ff).

The reception of the kingdom from the Father and the accompanying transfer of power and authority are recorded in Dan. 7:9-14:

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [‘were placed’], and the Ancient of days did sit...

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (vv. 9a, 13, 14).

It will be *in THAT coming day* that Christ and His co-heirs, presently being called out, *will ascend the throne, possess the kingdom, and rule the earth with “a rod of iron.”*

Or, to state matters another way, it will be *in THAT coming day* that the King with His consort queen *will ascend the throne, possess the kingdom, and rule the earth with “a rod of iron.”*

Christ and His co-heirs, His bride, will rule the earth in this manner for 1,000 years, the manner and length of time which God has deemed necessary to effect order out of disorder (*cf.* Ps. 2:6-9; I Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 2:26, 27).

17

DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility of Individual Servants, Christians

“For the kingdom of the heavens is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money” (Matt. 25:14-18).

“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).

The Master of the house, prior to His departure, entrusted His goods to the servants within His house, leaving them with the command, “Occupy till I come.” The Master’s servants were to *be busily involved in the use of THAT which had been entrusted to their care during the time of the Householder’s absence, NOT in other things.*

The Householder had previously purchased the servants, paying the price with His Own blood at Calvary.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

They were “his own servants.” *They belonged to Him ALONE, and they were to serve Him ALONE.*

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (I Cor. 7:23).

The Master of the house, being perfectly just and righteous, is revealed to be a Householder Who deals with His servants accordingly. There is NO unfair treatment or any mistreatment of the servants. Everything is carried out within the framework of the Householder’s perfect justice and righteousness.

The Householder had entrusted a portion of His goods and a corresponding responsibility to each servant (*with ALL His goods being distributed after a particular fashion among ALL His servants*). NOT a single servant was overlooked. And within this distribution and responsibility, *there was ONE thing above ALL else which the Householder expected: faithfulness to assigned responsibility* (I Cor. 4:2).

Then within the Master’s just and righteous dealings, faithfulness would result in commendation and reward; BUT unfaithfulness, on the other hand, would result in rebuke and chastisement.

Upon the Householder’s return, *each servant would be called to an accounting, with a view to faithfulness concerning that which had been delivered to that particular servant.*

Any thought that the Householder may overlook anyone or certain things — whether in the realm of either faithfulness or unfaithfulness — *would be completely out of character with His perfect justice and righteousness.* A just distribution among and a corresponding expectation concerning *ALL of His servants* occurred prior to the Householder’s departure, and an equally just accounting and recompense would occur concerning *ALL of His servants* when the Householder returned.

IF there were to be rewards for faithfulness, there *MUST* also be a corresponding chastisement for unfaithfulness, else injustice within the Householder’s dealings with His servants would occur.

A failure to deal with ALL of His household servants on EXACTLY the SAME basis would be completely out of line with the Householder’s perfect justice and righteousness, as it related to ALL of His goods previously placed in their charge.

Ten Servants, Ten Pounds

“Ten” is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing, in the parable of the pounds, to *ALL of the Master’s servants* and *ALL of the Master’s goods*. Prior to His departure into the far country, Christ called *ALL of His servants* and delivered unto them *ALL of His business*.

NOT a single servant was overlooked, and NOT a single item in His business was held back.

Numerical completeness is shown in the Olivet Discourse parables through *the ten virgins* taking their lamps and going forth to meet the Bridegroom. This parable is simply a continuation of the thought from the previous parable (the parable of the Householder and His servant), presenting a different facet of teaching surrounding the matter of a house being broken up.

And the parable of the talents which follows the parable of the ten virgins is “just as” the parable of the ten virgins, presenting yet another facet of this same teaching.

The parable of the talents, on the other hand, is essentially the same as the parable of the pounds in Luke chapter nineteen. Both show an overall view of the same sequence of events, though each presents certain things after a slightly different fashion.

ALL of these parables, along with companion parables such as the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-14), *MUST* be viewed together in order to see the complete picture. *Certain specific truths are emphasized in each, with no one parable being an island unto itself (cf. II Peter 1:20).* Specific truths from one parable will be in complete keeping, in every detail, with specific truths from another parable; and as one begins to correlate these truths, the complete subject will correspondingly begin to open to his understanding.

Parables comprise truths placed alongside of previous truths to help explain the previous truths. This is the thought derived from the meaning of the word itself. Our English word “parable” is a transliterated form of the compound Greek word *parabole*, which means “to cast alongside [*para* means ‘alongside,’ and *bole* means ‘to cast’].” Thus, a parable is simply one truth placed alongside of an existing truth to provide further light on the existing truth.

In this respect, viewing the four parables comprising the

Christian section of the Olivet Discourse, the parable of the Householder and His servant (second parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth concerning a house being broken up at the time of the Lord's return (first parable) in order to provide further information concerning this parable.

In turn, the parable of the ten virgins (third parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth (second parable, reflecting back on the first parable) to provide even further information.

That is, the parable of the ten virgins was given to provide additional information which would help to further explain the parable of the Householder and His servant, along with the parable concerning a house being broken up. And the same can be said for the relationship existing between the parable of the talents (fourth parable) and that which precedes this parable (the third parable in particular but the first two parables as well).

With these things in mind, along with the thought of ten servants and ten pounds, we can move back into the Old Testament and view a corresponding type after a somewhat similar fashion.

In Gen. 24:1ff the account is given concerning Abraham sending His eldest servant into Mesopotamia to procure a bride for his son, Isaac. The servant had in his possession "ten camels" laden with *his master's goods*, and the Scripture specifically states that "*all the goods of his master were in his hand*" (v. 10).

"Ten" shows *ordinal completion* (ALL the goods of his master, carried by the ten camels), as in the parable of the ten virgins or the parable of the pounds. And the manner in which the pounds (the Master's goods) are to be used is shown in the type.

Abraham's eldest servant, typifying the Holy Spirit in the world today, is the one who took his master's goods and laid them out before the prospective bride. He, as in the antitype in John 16:14, 15, took the things of Abraham (which belonged to Isaac, for "unto him hath he [Abraham] given all that he hath" [v. 36; cf. 25:5]) and showed/gave them to Rebekah.

The Holy Spirit is doing *the same thing* in the world today. He is taking the things of the Father, which have been given to the Son (the Son has been made "*heir of all things*" [Heb. 1:2; cf. John 16:15]), and He is revealing them to Christians.

The Lord's servants, during the time of His absence, are to function in complete dependence upon the power and work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's goods are seen in possession of His servants in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, and these same goods are seen in possession of the Holy Spirit in the antitype of Gen. 24:10, 36, 53.

These goods are to be used by the Lord's servants under the perfect leadership of the Holy Spirit. This truth can be seen by comparing the parable of the ten virgins with the parable of the talents. The faithful, productive servants in the parable of the talents are synonymous with the five wise virgins possessing the extra supply of Oil in the parable of the ten virgins.

That is to say, faithful, productive servants are those wise servants filled with the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to govern and control their affairs.

Or, to state the matter after another fashion, faithfulness in allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself in His fullness in one's life will, through a use of the Lord's goods, result in productivity, fruit-bearing.

Another thing which can be seen through viewing the parables in the Olivet Discourse within their correct framework and comparing things taught in these parables with things taught in Genesis chapter twenty-four is the correct Scriptural view concerning the resurrection and rapture of Christians at the conclusion of the present dispensation. Some Bible students take the section preceding the parable of the Householder and His servant as referring to the *rapture* (ref. Chapter X in this book). However, aside from internal evidence within this section showing that this *CANNOT be the case*, the succeeding three parables reveal that something completely different is in view. That which is in view concerns *Christians appearing before the Lord in judgment following the rapture, NOT Christians being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture.*

ALL of the servants — the faithful and the unfaithful alike — are dealt with *by the Lord TOGETHER, at the SAME time.*

They are removed together (though such would have to be inferred if using the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse alone, for this section of Scripture does not deal with the rapture), and they are subsequently judged together.

The type in Genesis chapter twenty-four shows *ALL the servants of the Lord being removed together at the SAME time.*

When Abraham's servant departed Mesopotamia, Rebekah and her damsels rode upon the "ten" camels (v. 61; cf. v. 10).

That is, *ALL went forth to meet Isaac at the SAME time, though NOT ALL would be manifested as the bride. Rebekah ALONE covered herself with a veil when Isaac approached. She clothed herself, anticipating meeting the bridegroom, which could ONLY point to the wedding garment in the antitype.*

The wedding garment is comprised of "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8, ASV) — works emanating out of faithfulness to one's calling, producing an increase through the use of the talents or pounds — and this is the garment with which Christians *MUST clothe themselves when they arrive in the Bridegroom's presence, else they will appear naked* (cf. Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 3:17, 18).

The Master's servants have been called, and His goods have been committed to their trust. *ALL of the Master's servants participate in this calling, and ALL will one day be called forth to render an account.*

In THAT coming day there will be both faithful and unfaithful servants who will be shown to have been either profitable or profitless servants. It will be *at THAT time, NOT before*, that a separation of the Lord's servants will occur. It will be *in THAT day that a full disclosure will be made among ALL the Lord's servants concerning how each one handled that portion of the Lord's goods committed to his trust.*

A Distribution Among Servants

The main difference between the parable of the talents in Matthew and the parable of the pounds in Luke is the manner in which the Lord's goods were distributed to His servants.

In Matthew, these goods are referred to as "talents"; and they are seen being distributed *according to a man's ability*, with some servants receiving more than other servants. In the parable of the pounds though, each servant is seen receiving an identical amount simply because of *his individual identity* — a servant of the Lord. "Ability," as in the parable of the talents, is not in view.

The talents and pounds have to do with monetary units of exchange. These are the Master's goods, spoken of in a monetary

sense (gold or silver coins, which could vary in size and worth, would be forms of either).

The Lord described His goods and the use of these goods after a fashion which man could readily understand. Though the Lord's goods were not actually talents and pounds per se, the Lord, speaking to His disciples, used the quite familiar method of trading and trafficking within their own monetary system to illustrate how the goods He was leaving behind were to be used.

(The Greek words used in the parables of the talents and the pounds for that delivered by the Householder to His servants are *talanton* [translated "talent" in Matt. 25] and *mna* [translated "pound" in Luke 19].

Both refer to the same thing — *weighed amounts of a substance, usually coins, used as units of exchange.*)

The parable of the pounds shows each servant possessing equal responsibility and worth in the Lord's sight, though each servant does not exhibit the same degree of faithfulness and zeal during the Lord's absence. Ten pounds are delivered to ten servants, with each servant receiving one pound (v. 13; *cf.* vv. 16-20); and *NO* distinction is made in the servants *UNTIL* they appear before the Lord at the time of His return. *ONLY THEN* does a distinction and/or separation occur on the basis of productivity (emanating out of faithfulness) within the sphere of delegated responsibility.

The parable of the talents shows *the SAME thing, though after a different fashion*. Each servant receives a portion of the Lord's goods based on his "ability," with some servants receiving more than other servants; but there is still equal responsibility and worth among the servants in the Lord's sight. This is evident by the Lord's dealings with His servants at the time of His return. Servants receiving two different amounts preceding the Lord's departure but exhibiting the same degree of faithfulness and zeal during His absence received identical commendations from the Lord when He returned.

One servant received five talents, another servant received two talents, and another servant received one talent (v. 15).

The servant in possession of the five talents realized an increase of one hundred percent. He gained five additional talents because of his proper invested use of the initial five which the Lord had

entrusted to his care (v. 20). The servant in possession of the two talents did likewise. He also realized an increase of one hundred percent. He gained two additional talents through a proper invested use of the two talents which the Lord had entrusted to his care (v. 22). Each servant exhibited *the SAME degree of faithfulness and zeal to the responsibility with which they had been entrusted, and each received the SAME commendation (vv. 21, 23), which undoubtedly would result in the SAME reward.*

The servant in possession of the one talent though hid his lord's money, *realizing NO increase, for there was NO investment.* Had this servant exhibited the same degree of faithfulness and zeal as the other two servants, bringing forth an increase of one hundred percent, one additional talent, he too would have heard his Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant..." He would have received the same commendation (and undoubtedly the same reward) as the other two servants.

BUT, such was NOT his lot; and because of unfaithfulness to that with which he had been entrusted, he suffered rebuke and chastisement at the time he was called forth to give an accounting (vv. 24-30).

Rebuke and chastisement for unfaithfulness MUST be just as much a part of the Lord's dealings with his servants as commendation and reward for faithfulness. IF such were NOT the case, as previously shown, perfect justice and righteousness within the Lord's dealings with His servants would NOT be satisfied.

Different degrees of reward are shown in the parable of the pounds, *NOT* in the parable of the talents. Rewards are based on *works emanating out of faithfulness; and faithfulness, resulting in works, has to do with that portion of the Lord's goods committed to one's trust.*

A servant is to exercise faithfulness within *the scope of the talent/talents or the pound in his possession.* That delivered to another is *NOT* his concern but rather the concern of the one to whom it was delivered, and conversely.

In the parable of the pounds, one servant, through his efforts, brought forth one thousand percent (v. 16); and another servant, at the same time, through his efforts, brought forth five hundred percent (v. 18). Accordingly, *they were BOTH commended; BUT, they did NOT receive identical rewards (vv. 17, 19). Their rewards were commensurate*

with the return on their investment, resulting from their individual labors (faithfulness, resulting in the Lord doing a work through them).

Then, again, as in the parable of the talents, there is the case of the servant failing in his responsibility. And, as also in the parable of the talents, the Lord's perfect justice and righteousness were satisfied through the unfaithful servant receiving an equally just recompense (vv. 20-26). *He, as the faithful servants, received EXACTLY what he deserved, NOTHING more, NOTHING less.*

(In THAT future day, ALL actions of the Lord will be in perfect keeping with that which the expression "just recompense of reward" means [cf. Heb. 2:2; 10:35; 11:6, 26]. A just recompense is receiving EXACTLY what an individual deserves, whether good or bad.

Note how the Greek word for reward [*misthos*], having to do with "payment" or "wages" for services rendered, is used in a just recompense respect in the New Testament. In Luke 6:23, 35 and II John 8 the word is used in a positive sense, in connection with *faithfulness*; but in II Peter 2:13, 15 and Jude 11 the word is used in a negative sense, in connection with *unfaithfulness*. And in all of the preceding verses, each person — whether having exhibited *faithfulness* or *unfaithfulness* — received "a just recompense of reward [as will be the case with every Christian].")

The Commission to Servants

Two things are to be avoided during the time of the Lord's absence:

- 1) *Being unoccupied or idle.*
- 2) *Being busy in the wrong realm.*

Prior to His departure, *the Lord was very specific* concerning the conduct of His servants between the time of His departure and the time of His return. He had distributed His goods to His servants and had left them with the specific command, "*Occupy till I come.*"

The Lord's servants were to be occupied with handling the Lord's goods, His business, throughout the entire time of His absence. The Master of the house had left those within His household in charge of matters pertaining to affairs in His house. He had distributed the household business among His servants in the house according to

their individual ability to function in particular realms; and He had left each servant with a specific charge to faithfully carry out the particular household responsibility with which he had been entrusted.

1) *His Own Servants*

The parable of the talents provides the capstone for the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. If any question still lingers in one's mind concerning the identity of those in the field (24:40), those grinding at the mill (24:41), the servant who either remains faithful or becomes unfaithful (24:45-51), or the wise and foolish virgins (25:1-13), the opening verse of the concluding parable in this section will resolve the matter.

The Householder called "his own servants," which leaves no room to question the identity of those in view throughout the entire section.

There is a double possessive in the structure of the Greek text in Matt. 25:14 (*idios* [meaning "one's own"], preceded by the definite article), with the proper translation of this structure, as seen in the English text, "His Own."

Idios, "one's own," refers specifically to that which belongs to an individual in contrast to that which is not his, belonging to another. This is the word used twice in John 1:11, where the same double possessive structure appears in the Greek text each time:

"He came unto his own [*idia*, neuter plural, preceded by the article ('His Own things')], and his own [*idioi*, masculine plural, preceded by the article ('His Own people')] received him not."

The things to which He came (the throne of David, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.) were His Own things, though not yet in His possession; and those who rejected Him were His Own people, the Jewish people, constituting God's firstborn son, His covenant people, and Christ's brethren according to the flesh.

Things and individuals outside the scope of "His Own" are *NOT* in view in John 1:11. Jesus specifically stated that He had been sent *ONLY* to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and He commissioned His disciples to go *ONLY* to these same individuals, forbidding them to go "into the way of the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24).

The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth [Gk., *polit-*

eia, referring to one's 'citizenship' or 'political sphere of activity'] of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

The SAME thing is true through the use of the expression, "his own servants," in Matt. 25:14. The specific reference is *to those within His household, as those within the now desolated house of Israel in John 1:11*. "His own servants" can refer to *NONE other than those who belong to Him, comprising His house during the present dispensation*.

These individuals are *NEITHER Jew NOR Gentile but rather comprise the "one new man" in Christ*.

Through *NO type of sound exegesis* can "his own servants" be enlarged to include unsaved Jews or Gentiles.

And the servant thrust into the darkness outside at the conclusion of the parable *MUST be reckoned to possess the SAME standing relative to being the Lord's Own servant as the servants allowed to enter into the joy of their Lord in an earlier part of the parable*.

2) His Goods

In Genesis chapter twenty-four, the mission of Abraham's servant was to obtain a bride for Isaac. The servant had in his possession *ALL of his master's goods, which belonged to Isaac*; and these goods were carried into Mesopotamia with a view to obtaining a bride for Abraham's son, who remained with his father throughout the time of the search.

Abraham's servant, once in Mesopotamia and in the presence of Abraham's own people, made known the purpose for his journey; and once Rebekah had been singled out as the prospective bride, the servant brought forth "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." He gave these to Rebekah, and he also gave "precious things" to other family members (v. 53).

In the antitype, the Holy Spirit is in the world today to obtain a bride for Christ. This is His primary mission in the world during the present dispensation. He has in His possession all the Father's goods, which belong to the Son; and these goods have been brought into the world with a view to obtaining a bride for the Son, who remains with the Father throughout the time of the search.

The Holy Spirit, as He indwells those comprising the "one new

man" *in Christ*, makes known the purpose for His presence in the world today; and once this purpose begins to be realized — once Christians become aware of *the true nature of the Holy Spirit's present ministry and begin to manifest an interest in that which is uppermost in the mind of the Father* — they find themselves, as Rebekah, coming into possession of choice treasures from the things which belong to the Son. And, in line with the type, even other family members, other Christians, come into possession of "precious things" from the Son's storehouse of treasures.

The distribution of the Master's goods among His servants during the present dispensation *MUST* be in accord with I Cor. 2:9, 10:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*"

God has made known, *through His Word*, the things which He has prepared "for them that love him." And the indwelling Holy Spirit takes this Word, searching "all things, yea, the deep things of God," and reveals these things to Christians.

In the type there was a distribution of the son's goods to both Rebekah and other family members, *but this was NOT an equal distribution. The prospective bride received the largest and best portion.*

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds there was a distribution among all servants, but in the parable of the talents some servants received *more* than other servants.

The unequal distribution of the Lord's goods among Christians, as previously seen, occurs on the basis of "ability" (Gk., dunamis, "power" [v. 15]), which could ONLY be inseparably associated with the Christians' interest in and adherence to that which Scripture reveals as the very purpose for the present dispensation (ref. next page).

God has set aside two days, two thousand years, to call out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with His Son during the coming age. These co-heirs will constitute the bride of Christ, who will reign as consort queen, seated on the throne with Him.

And the Holy Spirit is in the world today procuring the bride.

It is those Christians who manifest an interest in and respond to the Holy Spirit's call as He searches for the bride who find themselves in the position of Rebekah in Gen. 24:53. These are the ones who come into possession of "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

Other Christians, though they are in possession of what is called "precious things," find themselves in an entirely different category in relation to things reserved peculiarly for the bride.

"Ability," as in the parable of the talents, in the light of the type in Gen. 24:1ff, is *NOT* to be thought of in a *natural sense* but in a *spiritual sense*. Some men have great natural "ability," allowing them to achieve numerous things; but "ability" in the parable of the talents is something entirely different. "Ability" in this parable *can ONLY have to do with an individual's capacity to carry on matters of a spiritual nature through spiritual means in the Lord's house, NOT matters of a natural nature through natural means either in the house or out in the world; and this ability pertains particularly and peculiarly to matters relating to the purpose for the present dispensation.*

Those Christians who understand the true nature of the Holy Spirit's mission in the world today, allowing the Holy Spirit to do a work in their lives within this same framework, would have to be looked upon as the ones possessing *the MOST capacity in the realm of "ability"*; and within this group there would be varying degrees of "ability," with some Christians being more zealous in their faithful servitude than other Christians.

"Lesser ability" within this same framework would correspondingly come about through *lesser capacity* as individuals possess lesser degrees of a work of the Spirit in their lives, in keeping with the purpose for the present dispensation.

An interesting thought drawn from Gen. 24:53 concerns the type goods, from those belonging to Isaac, which the servant gave to Rebekah. He delivered into her hands "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

The "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," which would constitute a portion of the Lord's goods used in trading and trafficking in the antitype, are ultimately seen in a similar sense in connection with

issues surrounding the judgment seat of Christ (where usage of that delivered to household servants during the present dispensation will be dealt with). Those Christians using the “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold” to bring forth an increase during the present time will see their works described after *the SAME fashion*, as “gold, silver, precious stones,” at the judgment seat. However, those Christians failing in this respect *will have NOTHING to show but works described after an entirely different fashion*, as “wood, hay, stubble” (I Cor. 3:12-15).

Then the “raiment” would undoubtedly point to *the wedding garment*, for the prospective bride in the type arrayed herself in a proper fashion before meeting Isaac (Gen. 24:65).

And the same can only hold true in the antitype.

The wedding garment is made up of “righteous acts” (Rev. 19:8), and Christians have been granted the privilege of clothing themselves through the proper use of the Lord’s goods in their possession.

Concluding Remarks:

The Lord’s command concerning the manner of living in which those of His house are to be engaged during the time of His absence is clear. *The Lord has delivered ALL His goods into the hands of ALL His servants and has left them with the command, “Occupy till I come.”*

Each servant is to be busily engaged, on his Lord’s behalf, with that portion of the Lord’s goods delivered to him personally. *He is NOT to be engaged in another’s affairs, NOR are others to be engaged in his affairs.*

He is responsible to the Lord ALONE to exercise faithfulness within the scope of His calling; and he will one day answer to the Lord ALONE, at the time of His return, for faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out delegated responsibility within the house.

The nature of rewards for faithfulness is clearly revealed to be that of occupying one of the numerous proffered positions as co-heir with Christ, seated with Him on the throne, during the coming age (Matt. 24:47; 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17, 19).

And *the nature of chastisement for unfaithfulness* is clearly revealed to be *NOT ONLY* that of being rejected for one of the numerous proffered positions with Christ *BUT* that of chastisement as well (Matt. 24:48-51; 25:26-30; Luke 19:22-26).

18

AND TO RETURN

To Complete a Triad of Appearings

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them” (Matt. 25:19).

“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded those servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much each man had gained by trading” (Luke 19:15).

The emphasis in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds is upon the necessity of *present faithfulness* during the time of the Nobleman’s absence, with a view to *a future reckoning* at the time of the Nobleman’s return; and the future reckoning is with a view to *the kingdom which the Nobleman has gone away to receive*.

These two parables outline the complete scope of the present dispensation (God’s dealings with a house separate and distinct from the desolated house of Israel), providing the reason for the present dispensation, the reason for Christ’s departure into heaven, and the reason for His return.

The Nobleman (Christ) has gone into heaven “to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (Luke 19:12).

The administration of this kingdom, a worldwide kingdom (Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 1:33), will require *numerous qualified rulers*; and during the time between Christ’s departure to receive the kingdom and His return after having received the kingdom, the “many sons” *who will ascend the throne and reign as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom are being called out* (cf. Acts 15:14; Heb. 2:9, 10).

These “many sons” will also form “the bride of Christ,” who will reign *as consort queen with the Son*. And, according to the type in Genesis chapter twenty-four, the central focus of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the world today is clearly seen to be that of *acquiring a bride for God’s Son (or, acquiring Christ’s co-heirs, who will form His bride)*.

The Father, at the beginning of the dispensation (Acts 2:1ff), *sent the Holy Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son, destined to reign as consort queen with the Son (ref. Chapter XVII in this book)*.

And that which is central in the Holy Spirit’s ministry would have to be looked upon as ALSO central in the ministry of the Lord’s servants as they manage affairs in His house during the present dispensation.

The SAME revealed goal seen in the former MUST be seen in the latter.

(God’s Son CANNOT reign apart from co-heirs — apart from the “many sons” of Heb. 2:10 — to administer affairs with Him in the kingdom. This is the way matters were seen in David’s kingdom in the type in I, II Samuel. And things *can be NO different* for David’s greater Son in His kingdom.

As well, this is the way matters are seen throughout God’s universal kingdom [*e.g., this earth, a province in the kingdom of God, presently under the control of Satan and his angels*].

NOR can God’s Son reign apart from a bride. This is the way matters were established at the time of man’s creation in the opening chapters of Genesis. And *they can NEVER change*, which is why God had to possess a wife [Israel] to reign in the Old Testament theocracy.

In the type, Eve, a part of Adam’s body [Gen. 2:21-24], completed Adam, which would have allowed Adam to ascend the throne as one complete being.

This is why Satan approached Eve to bring about the fall. If he could cause Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, he would place Adam in a position where he *could NOT* realize the purpose for his creation, for Adam *could NOT THEN ascend the throne as a complete being*.

In the antitype, the second Man’s bride, the last Adam’s bride, as Eve, will be removed from and formed from a part of His body [following redemption, necessitated by Satan’s act in Genesis chapter three, with Christ having subsequently acted in the antitype of Adam’s actions, making redemption possible (Adam partaking of sin, Christ being made sin — Gen. 3:6; II Cor. 5:21)].

And, *EXACTLY* as in the type, Christ can *ONLY* reign as a complete being, with His bride seated alongside. The bride will be part of Christ's very being and complete the Son [in the same sense that Eve was part of Adam's very being and completed Adam].

The word translated "perfect" in Heb. 2:10 [referring to the "many sons," who will form *the bride, making the Son "perfect"*] is a translation of *teleioo* ['bring to an end'] in the Greek text. This word, contextually, could be better translated and understood as "complete." The "many sons" forming *the bride will complete God's Son in that day.*)

Salvation is for a *purpose*, and that purpose has to do with *the coming kingdom*. We have been called "unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Salvation is *NOT* so much saved *FROM* ("hell") as it is saved *UNTO* ("his kingdom and glory"). *And to deal with the salvation issue outside of this framework, as so many do, is NOT in keeping with the Biblical picture at all.*

ANY approach to evangelism as an end in itself, or any approach to discipleship which seeks to effect maturity apart from a knowledge of the reason Christ has gone into heaven, the reason for the present dispensation, and the reason for Christ's return, *CANNOT be considered as a Biblically oriented approach to be taken by the Lord's household servants.*

A proper evangelistic approach will view eternal salvation as a *beginning point, NOT an end*. Once an individual has been evangelized (saved), he finds himself beginning an entirely new life. He, as a newborn Christian, is *THEN* to be placed under the ministry of a pastor-teacher, where discipleship comes into view.

The pastor-teacher is to be instrumental in leading the person from immaturity to maturity within a framework surrounding *the reason for his salvation*. As there is a *purpose for salvation*, there is also a *purpose for maturity, with the SAME ultimate GOAL in view*.

The current Laodicean state of Christendom, along with the widespread immaturity of Christians and confusion in Christian circles, can all be traced directly to an incorrect approach to evangelism and/or discipleship. Somewhere along the way there has been a breakdown in the process, resulting in untrained or improperly trained household servants and a subsequent nonunderstanding or

misunderstanding of household affairs. *Mismanagement within the household by the Lord's servants then follows, with tragic consequences.*

Man fell from a created position in Genesis, and the purpose for man's salvation *can ONLY, in turn, have to do with the purpose for his creation:*

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion [Heb. *radah*, ‘rule’] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping things that creepeth upon the earth.

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

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

Redeemed man *possessing dominion over the earth*, in line with God's original purpose for his creation, *MUST be viewed as the ultimate GOAL of salvation.* That's the way matters surrounding the purpose for man's creation and the corresponding reason Satan brought about his fall are set forth in the first three chapters of Genesis.

And the remainder of Scripture regarding God's purpose surrounding man's salvation, his restoration, *MUST be in line with God's revealed purpose for bringing man into existence as set forth in the established foundations of Scripture.*

Man's restoration can ONLY be for the SAME purpose seen in the reason for his creation and fall.

And this is outlined after a fashion in the parables of the talents and pounds, along with so many other places in Scripture, that it would seemingly be impossible for man to miss it. But...

Three Appearings of Christ in Connection with Salvation

Within the framework of that which is revealed in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, the writer of Hebrews refers to three appearings of Christ in connection with salvation.

One appearing is past, one is present, and one is future.

Christ's three appearings have been recorded together within the same context at the end of the ninth chapter; and, in keeping with the previously announced work of the Son pertaining to bringing "many sons unto glory" (2:10), these three appearings provide the proper interrelationship between the Lord's work as *Prophet (past)*, *Priest (present)*, and *King (future)*.

1) Past Appearing

"...but now once in the end of the world ['the end of the ages'] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26b).

Unredeemed man is *dead in trespasses and sins*. He is alienated from God. Redeemed man though has been *made alive*, and a right relationship with God has been restored (Eph. 2:1-7; Col. 2:13-15). This has been accomplished solely through the finished work of the Redeemer, promised in Gen. 3:15 immediately following man's fall.

At the time Adam fell, "death passed upon all men." Adam fell as the federal head of the human race. Thus, the fall included *NOT ONLY* the one who had sinned, Adam, *BUT ALL* of his descendants as well, even though his descendants had neither been born nor would sin "after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (Rom. 5:12-14).

Consequently, "*all have sinned*"; and the penalty for sin, established in Eden, is *death* (cf. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:23).

(The Biblical definition of "death." as also established in Eden, is *separation from God*. Adam, eating of the forbidden fruit, experienced death the instant he partook of the fruit. Separation from God occurred at that point in time. Both Adam and Eve, at the time Adam partook of the fruit, *experienced spiritual death, separation from God*.)

Note that *sin* in Rom. 3:23 [because of Adam's federal headship bringing about *death* (Rom. 6:23), which has "passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12)] has left all men "short of the glory of God."

Adam lost this Glory at the time of the fall [a covering which enswathed his body], man finds himself estranged from this Glory today, but this Glory will one day be restored to man [Rom. 5:2]. And, *in THAT day*, man will no longer find himself "short of the glory of God."

The manner in which the Glory is first introduced in Scripture and later seen manifested in the camp of Israel leaves the Glory connected

with ONE thing alone — with regality, with man realizing the purpose for his creation in the beginning.

For additional information in this realm, refer to pp. 120-124 in Chapter VIII of this book.)

In order to bring man back into a right relationship with God, the Redeemer *MUST* pay sin's penalty. The Redeemer *MUST* die on man's behalf. This is the reason God sent His Son "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," bearing "the sins of many" (Heb. 9:26-28).

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3b).

As in the words of the song, "Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe..." His finished work of redemption leaves *NOTHING* for man to do simply because there is *NOTHING* which man, "dead in trespasses and sins," could do (Eph. 2:1).

(Immediately before Christ died on the Cross, *He cried out ONE word: Tetelestai*, translated "It is finished [*lit.*, "It has been finished"]." Christ then "breathed out" [literal rendering in Mark 15:37, 39; Luke 23:46]. That is, He willingly relinquished His life, for there was no need for Him to prolong His sufferings at this point in time [*cf.* Matt. 27:50; John 19:30]. All which He had come to do in relation to paying the price for man's redemption had been accomplished.

Tetelestai is a perfect tense usage of *teleo*, meaning "to bring to an end," "to finish," "to complete." Christ's perfect tense usage of this word announced *a work which had been completed in past time, with the results of this work existing during present time in a finished state* [at the time He cried out, using the word *teleo* in the perfect tense].

NOTHING can ever be added to this finished work, for it is complete as it stands, with *God being satisfied with His Son's finished work; NOR* can anything ever be taken from the Son's finished work.

Again, *God is satisfied with the matter as it stands, and man simply CANNOT move over into and do one single act in this realm.*)

Aside from being spiritually dead and alienated from God, unredeemed man is presented in Scripture as *a ruined creation*; and the pattern concerning how God restores a ruined creation

has *FOREVER* been set forth in the opening verses of Genesis: The Spirit moved, God spake, light came into existence... (Gen. 1:2b, 3).

ALL work, resulting in the restored material creation, was accomplished entirely through Divine intervention. And it is the same concerning ruined man today.

ALL of the work has already been accomplished by man's Redeemer. Man, relative to this work, *MUST* be as completely passive as the ruined earth in Gen. 1:2b-5. *He can do NO more than simply receive that which Christ has already done on his behalf* (Acts 16:30, 31).

As has previously been shown, *Christ's appearance to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and man's coming rule over the earth* are so intimately related that one *CANNOT* be separated from the other.

Man was created *to have dominion*; but he fell, bringing about his disqualification. And *redemption is with a view to placing man back into a position where he can ultimately occupy the position from which he fell*. Such an outlook on the intimate relationship between *the reason* surrounding man's creation and *the reason* surrounding his redemption is the focal point of Scripture, beginning with the opening verses of Genesis.

a) *Restoration of the Material Creation*: The material creation was restored, *NOT* for the incumbent ruler and those occupying positions with him (Satan and his angels), *BUT* for an entirely new creation about to be brought into existence.

A ruin of the material creation had previously occurred because of Satan's aspirations to exercise power beyond that which God had given to him. He sought to "be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14). Rather than being content with his position as ruler over one kingdom, he sought to elevate his throne and rule over more than one kingdom, possibly over all kingdoms.

As a result, his kingdom was wrecked, and he himself was disqualified as the earth's ruler, though he would continue to hold the sceptre until God removed him from this position and gave the kingdom to another.

A restoration of the ruined creation then subsequently occurred, with a view to a change in the government.

b) *The Creation of Man*: Immediately following the restoration of the material creation (Gen. 1:2b-25), God created man in His Own “image” and “likeness” (a type creation unknown in the angelic world). And man was created for *a stated purpose, in line with the immediately preceding restoration of the ruined domain.*

At the time of man’s creation, God said, “...let them have dominion...” (Gen. 1:26-28). This was the dominion possessed by Satan and his angels, which was to ultimately pass into the hands of man. The material creation had been restored, and man was brought into existence to take the sceptre (in the stead of Satan and his angels) and rule over the restored domain.

c) *The Fall of Man*: Satan, knowing why man had been created, immediately began a work to bring about man’s disqualification.

Satan approached Eve and deceived her through the same means which had previously brought about his own fall: “...ye shall be as gods [‘like God’]...” (Gen. 3:5).

Satan had previously sought to be “like the most High [like God],” resulting in his fall and a ruined kingdom; and God’s new creation, subsequently being deceived to move in the same direction (though only Eve was deceived [I Tim. 2:14]), experienced the same consequences. Man, partaking of the forbidden fruit, found himself disqualified to fulfill the very purpose for his existence, and the restored earth over which man was to rule fell under a curse.

(One must understand that man *did NOT* assume the sceptre immediately following his creation. In fact, man *has NEVER* held the sceptre. Satan has held the sceptre, without interruption, *FROM* the time of his appointment [preceding Adam’s creation] *UNTIL* the present time.

This can be shown quite easily by noting the principle of Biblical government which necessitates an incumbent ruler holding the sceptre *UNTIL* he is actually replaced.

Had man taken the sceptre, *he WOULDN’T* have relinquished it at the time he partook of the fruit of the forbidden tree [actually, *he COULDN’T* have]. *Such DIDN’T* occur when Satan sinned, and *it COULDN’T* have occurred when man sinned either. *God ALONE* places and removes rulers in His kingdom, even in the governmental administration among men on the earth today [Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 4:17, 25-32; 5:18-21].

Had man held the sceptre at the time of his fall, he, as Satan had previously done, would have had to continue holding the sceptre *UNTIL God had brought forth a third provincial ruler*. Then again, had man held the sceptre at this time, *it could NOT have been reclaimed by Satan* [who holds it today], for Satan was a disqualified ruler. *He would have had NO more claim on the sceptre than man*.

And, if man had held the sceptre and Satan had wrested it from man, the statement in Luke 4:5, 6, in the temptation account [Satan tempting Christ in the wilderness] *could NOT be true at all, for God would NOT have been the One to place Satan in this position*:

“And the devil, taking him [Christ] up into an high mountain [‘a mountain’ signifying *a kingdom*], shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world [one world kingdom comprised of many individual kingdoms] in a moment of time [cf. Rev. 11:15 — ‘the kingdom of the world,’ ASV, NASB].

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them [‘and its glory’]: *for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*”

Note, in this same respect [God positioning and removing rulers], the account of Saul and David in the Books of I, II Samuel, an account depicting the complete panorama of the past, present, and future government of the earth as it relates to the incumbent ruler [Satan] and the coming Ruler [the second Man, the last Adam].

Saul was anointed king over Israel; but Saul disqualified himself by refusing, as God had commanded, to destroy the Amalekites and all of their possessions [I Sam. 15:1ff], though Saul continued to reign. *And Saul would continue to reign UNTIL the one whom God had chosen to replace him was NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to ascend the throne.*

Then note that which the type, thus far, foreshadows:

Satan was anointed king over the earth; but Satan disqualified himself through seeking to extend his rule beyond his God-appointed position [Isa. 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:14], though Satan continued to reign.

And Satan would continue to reign UNTIL the One Whom God had chosen to replace him was NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to ascend the throne.

In the type, shortly after God rejected Saul as Israel’s ruler, God had Samuel anoint David *king over Israel* [I Sam. 16:10-13]. There were then *two anointed kings in Israel*.

But David didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, he eventually found himself in a place out in the hills, separated from Saul and his kingdom. And, during this time, certain faithful men joined themselves to David and remained out in the hills with him.

The day came when David was ready to ascend the throne, possessing a contingent of faithful men ready to rule with him. Then, Saul was put down, his crown was taken and given to David, *and David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government.*

In the antitype, after God had rejected Satan as the earth's ruler, God anointed His Son *King over the earth* [Ps. 45:6, 7, 16; Heb. 1:8, 9]. There were then, and there are today, *two anointed Kings over the earth.*

But God's Son, as David in the type, didn't immediately ascend the throne. Rather, as David, Christ finds Himself in a place of exile, separated from the kingdom. And, as in David's case, certain faithful individuals join themselves to Christ during this time, remaining in the place of exile with Him.

But the day is near at hand when *matters will continue EXACTLY as seen in the type.* Christ, in that day, as David in his day, will be ready to ascend the throne, *possessing a contingent of faithful followers to rule with Him.*

THEN, Satan, as Saul, will be put down, his crown will be taken and given to Christ; and Christ, with His faithful followers, will move in and take over the government.)

d) *The Redemption of Man:* Immediately following the fall, God promised man a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15); and because God *does NOT change His mind* concerning His "gifts and calling" (Rom. 11:29), *the purpose for man's redemption would have to be in keeping with the purpose for his creation.*

Man was to be redeemed with a view to his possessing dominion over the earth (which *could ONLY* be dominion over a future earth, for the earth following man's fall lay [and continues to lie today] under "the bondage of corruption" [Rom. 8:21]).

e) *God's Firstborn Son in Egypt:* Two and one-half millenniums later we see God culminating a work and moving in the direction of placing man in the position for which he had been created.

God called *His son, His firstborn son, the nation of Israel* (Ex. 4:22, 23), out of Egypt under Moses *to exercise the rights of primogeniture in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

These rights, among other things, had to do with the people of Israel ruling over all the Gentile nations of the earth — *national rights which had to do with Israel and the nations.*

BEFORE God removed His people from Egypt though, redemption had to *FIRST* occur, as shown by the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt. *ALL the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt came under the sentence of death* — sin's wages — *and NO move could be made toward the land of Canaan UNTIL these wages had been paid.*

To satisfy sin's wages but yet remove the firstborn from Egypt alive, God made provision for a substitutionary death. God decreed that a lamb from the flock could die in the stead of the firstborn in a family. The lamb was to be slain, the blood was to be caught in a basin, hyssop was to be dipped in the blood, and the blood was to be applied to the door posts and lintel of the house in which the firstborn lived.

Then, when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight, executing the decreed death of the firstborn, He would, of necessity, *pass over the house where the blood had been applied.*

The applied blood showed that the firstborn within the house had already died. He had died via a recognized vicarious means; and consequently death could NO longer have any claim on him (Ex. 11:4-7; 12:1ff).

Redemption, as shown by the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt, was for a purpose; and that purpose was to be brought to pass by the Israelites being removed from Egypt and realizing the rights of the firstborn in the land of Canaan.

f) *God's Firstborn Son Sent into the World:* A millennium and one-half beyond the Exodus from Egypt under Moses, God fulfilled His promise concerning a coming Redeemer.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Jesus was God's Firstborn Son, the One in line to exercise the rights of primogeniture as the second Man, the last Adam; and He came into the world *to redeem man, with the adoption in view.*

Adoption places “sons” in the position of *firstborn sons*. The adoption is with a view to man exercising regal activity in God’s kingdom, for *ONLY sons can rule in this kingdom* (e.g., “angels” during present time, with all angels being *sons of God* because of their individual creation); and *ONLY firstborn sons can rule in God’s kingdom in the human realm*.

In this respect, the central purpose for Christ’s finished work at Calvary, according to Gal. 4:4, 5, has to do with placing man in a position (in the position of a son) where he can be adopted (into a firstborn status, as a *firstborn son*), *wherein man can realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning*.

Then, in another respect, Gal. 4:4, 5 clearly reveals that the purpose for redemption has to do with *the birthright*, associated with *the inheritance* in Gal. 3:29 (cf. Gal. 4:7).

The whole of the matter is inseparably tied together — “salvation” resulting in *sonship*, and then “adoption” resulting in *firstborn sons who can realize the rights of the firstborn and participate in the inheritance as co-heirs with Christ*.

God has redeemed man in order that He can ultimately bring man into a position where he can (as co-heir with Christ, God’s Firstborn) also realize the rights belonging to firstborn sons.

Over seven hundred years before Christ’s birth, Isaiah had prophesied concerning *the status of the earth’s future government under God’s promised Redeemer*:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts [the Lord burning with zeal to see His Son placed on His ‘holy hill of Zion’] will perform this” (Isa. 9:6, 7; cf. Ps. 2:6, 7).

This promise was then reiterated to Mary by the angel Gabriel shortly before the Redeemer’s birth (Luke 1:31-33).

Following Christ's birth the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, the capital of Jewry, seeking the One Who had been "born *King of the Jews*."

Herod the king was *troubled*, along with all Jerusalem; and Herod later had numerous Jewish children slain in and around Bethlehem in a vain attempt to destroy the newborn King (Matt. 2:1-18).

When Christ began His public ministry at about the age of thirty (Luke 3:23), the message to Israel concerned *a kingdom*; but Israel rejected the message and the Messenger.

At the end of His earthly ministry, Christ, because of Israel's rejection, was arrayed as a mock King; and the people of Israel then climaxed their rejection by claiming allegiance to Caesar and calling for Christ's crucifixion.

Jesus was then crucified, with an inscription placed above His head which read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 4:17; 21:33-39; John 19:1-19).

Following His resurrection, Christ spent forty days with His disciples, teaching them things pertaining to "the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3); and He then departed into heaven "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

g) *God's Firstborn Son Presently Being Called Forth*: "Israel" is still *God's firstborn*, though lying desolate; and this nation will one day be redeemed to realize *the regal status held by firstborn sons*.

However, while the house of Israel lies desolate, God is dealing with a separate and distinct house, destined to be adopted into *a firstborn status*. An adoption into this position, placing Christians in the same position as that held by Israel (in relation to firstborn sons), is, as previously shown, also *for regal purposes*.

ONLY sons can rule, and the purpose for man's redemption necessitates the adoption, for, again, ONLY firstborn sons can rule in God's kingdom in the human realm.

Christians are referred to in Scripture as both "children" and "sons" (about an equal number of times for each). But it is *ONLY* as "sons" that Christians await the adoption. "Children" *are NOT adopted*; *ONLY* "sons" can be adopted, evident from the meaning of the Greek word for "adoption."

(The word translated “adoption” in the New Testament is *huiiothesia*, a compound word [*huiios*, “son”; and *thesis*, “to position,” “to place”]. Thus, *huiiothesia* [“adoption”] simply means “son-positioning or “son-placing” [positioning or placing *one who is already a son, NOT positioning or placing a child*]. And Christians, already occupying the position of “sons” [because of their position “in Christ” — *new creations “in Christ”*], will be placed as *firstborn sons* at the time of the adoption.

[Note that *huiiothesia*, when used in relation to Christians, *could NOT* possibly refer to “children” being placed as *sons*, for, as previously stated, Christians already occupy the position of “sons,” preceding the adoption (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; 4:6, 7; Heb. 12:5-8)].

It is ONLY through this firstborn status, through being adopted, that Christians can one day occupy regal positions in Christ’s kingdom. “Christ” is God’s firstborn Son [because of birth (Heb. 1:6)]; “Israel” is God’s firstborn son [because of creation and adoption (Ex. 4:22, 23; Isa. 43:1; Rom. 9:4)]; and Christians, reigning with Christ, MUST occupy the same standing in the kingdom [God’s firstborn son (the one new man, seen corporately), which can occur ONLY following the adoption].

Christians as a corporate group in that coming day, the “church of the firstborn [*lit.*, ‘called out firstborn ones’ (Heb. 12:23)]” will be seen as *God’s firstborn son*, as Israel is presently seen as *God’s firstborn son*, awaiting that coming day when *the rights of firstborn sons* will be realized.

This is why the adoption of Christians occupies such a prominent place in Romans chapter eight and Galatians chapter four, where *the coming inheritance of the saints and the manifestation of a new order of sons are in view*.

For additional information on this subject, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*.)

Realizing the rights of primogeniture in such a position can ultimately be held *ONLY* by those who have appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb. As in Egypt, the firstborn via natural birth comes under the sentence of death (which, in the antitype, would include everyone in the human race; God has rejected the first birth, necessitating a second birth, a birth from above, a supernatural birth [John 3:6, 7]).

And as in Egypt, a Substitute has been provided; and, as also in Egypt, *salvation is for a purpose, which has to do with regality*.

Salvation is for a purpose associated with the birthright, and

redeemed individuals will be adopted in order to exercise the rights belonging to *firstborn sons*.

The simple, clear picture presented by the whole of Scripture concerns *man being brought back into the position for which he was created, which first necessitates redemption*.

Christ appeared "once...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," *with a view to two subsequent appearings*.

2) Present Appearing

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Heb. 9:24).

During the period between the time of His departure to receive the kingdom and the time of His return in possession of the kingdom, Christ is *NOT ONLY* seated at the right hand of the Father, *BUT* He is also exercising a high priestly ministry in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, anticipating receiving the kingdom from the Father; and He is exercising the office of High Priest in order to effect a present cleansing for those comprising the "one new man" *in Christ*, anticipating one day bringing forth "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing..." (Eph. 5:26, 27; Heb. 1:13; I John 1:6-2:2).

Christ presently ministers in the Holy of Holies on the basis of His shed blood. This blood was shed at Calvary to provide redemption for fallen man, and this same blood is presently on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary to provide a present cleansing for the redeemed.

Saved man, still possessing the old sin nature and residing in a body of death, is ever subject to defilement as he ministers on earth during his pilgrim walk, necessitating cleansing. And God provided a means of cleansing for His people during Old Testament days, and He has done the same today.

The Old Testament priests were provided with a brazen laver, containing upper and lower basins filled with water, to wash their

hands and feet as they ministered on behalf of the people between the brazen altar and the Holy Place; and blood sacrifices were offered by the priests daily and by the high priest on the day of atonement to provide a cleansing for those who had previously appropriated the blood of the paschal lambs (Heb. 7:27; 9:6, 7, 22).

New Testament priests though have been provided with a past Sacrifice, with no additional sacrifices ever again necessary. It is “a new and living way,” being “washed with pure water,” to effect a cleansing for those having previously appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb (Heb. 7:27; 10:12-22).

Christ’s past ministry as *Prophet* makes possible His present ministry as *Priest*, and both ministries look out ahead to the same thing — Christ’s future ministry as *King*.

One day Christ will terminate His present ministry and come forth from the Holy of Holies, first to reckon with those whom He has redeemed and for whom He presently ministers, and then to reign over the earth with the “many sons” whom He will have brought unto glory.

(For additional information on Christ’s present ministry on behalf of Christians in the heavenly sanctuary, refer to Chapter XIII in this book.)

3) Future Appearing

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him *shall He appear* the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

The three appearings of Christ are correspondingly connected with the three aspects of salvation:

We have been saved (past [Eph. 2:8, 9]).

We are being saved (present [I Cor. 1:18]).

We are about to be saved (future [Heb. 1:14]).

Once an individual has been saved (past, through the finished work of Christ at Calvary), that individual is then dealt with on an entirely different plane. He is then dealt with concerning a present salvation (on the basis of Christ’s past work at Calvary, but con-

nected with His present work in the heavenly sanctuary); and this is with a view to a future salvation (at the time of Christ's return).

"For by grace are ye saved ['you have been saved'] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish ['to the ones perishing'] foolishness; but unto us which are saved ['who are being saved'] it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ['for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation']" (Heb. 1:13, 14).

The past aspect of salvation (Eph. 2:8, 9) has to do with man's *spirit*. Man is a tripartite being comprised of body, soul, and spirit; and each of these three parts of man, within God's economy, is subject to salvation at different times. When man sinned in Eden, he died, just as God had decreed (Gen. 2:17). Since his body continued to live, and his soul — the life-giving principle in the blood (Lev. 17:11) — also continued to live, it is evident that man experienced a *spiritual death*.

Unredeemed man today, possessing an unredeemed body housing an unredeemed soul, is *spiritually dead*. The birth from above, correspondingly, is a *spiritual birth*, effecting the change "from death unto life."

"That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*."

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again ['born from above']" (John 3:6, 7).

(Note that Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus relative to the birth from above in John chapter three has to do with *the saved*, not with the unsaved. And, in like manner, *all of the other references in the New Testament where the birth from above is mentioned also have to do with the saved* [James 1:18; I Peter 1:3, 23; I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18].

The reference is to a *Divine work continuing to be wrought in the one [a Christian] in whom a Divine work was initially wrought [at the time that the Christian was saved].*

Though the reference in John chapter three [along with the other referenced passages] has to do with the saved, the thought of being brought forth from above would have to be thought of relative to the unsaved as well. The whole of the matter surrounding a person's salvation — whether past, present, or future aspects of salvation are in view — has to do with a *bringing forth from above at any point in this process* — whether of the unsaved or of the saved [*i.e.*, a beginning work of the Spirit, followed by a continuing work of the Spirit].

From beginning to end, the thought of a bringing forth from above would have to be in view. Thus, John 3:6, 7, though contextually referring to a work among the saved, can also be used in a secondary sense relative to the unsaved, for *there is NO other way* for an unsaved person to be saved aside from a Divine work being performed in his life, a bringing forth from above.

For more information on this subject, refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above.*)

The salvation of the soul, unlike the salvation of the spirit, is both present and future. And only those who have been born from above, realizing the salvation of their spirits, can enter into the things associated with the salvation of the soul. An individual *MUST* first pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1). *THEN, and ONLY THEN, does the salvation of the soul* come into view.

The present aspect of salvation (I Cor. 1:18), having to do with *the soul*, will be brought to completion at the time Christ returns and effects the redemption of man's body. The saving of the soul has to do with *the life which one lives after he has passed "from death unto life."*

This is the salvation referred to in connection with Christ's return in Heb. 9:28 (or Heb. 1:14), to be realized by those who "look for him [faithful servants in the house awaiting the Householder's return]."

Hebrews, as all of the other New Testament epistles, is a book dealing centrally with *the salvation of the soul*; and Christ, Who was "once offered to bear the sins of many [effecting the salvation

of the *spirit*]” is going to appear the “second time without sin unto salvation [to effect the salvation of the *soul*].”

(For a more detailed discussion of the preceding, see the author’s book, *Salvation of the Soul*.)

To deal with Christ’s first coming apart from His second coming is UTTER FOLLY. To have the message of an evangelist (concerning Christ’s past work) apart from the subsequent message of a pastor-teacher (concerning Christ’s present and future work) can ONLY lead to spiritual disaster in the Christian life.

Christ appeared once “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” He now appears “in the presence of God for us,” and one day He will “appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” *These three appearings comprise an indivisible unit inseparably related to man ultimately being brought back into the position for which he was created.*

Three Appearings of Christ in Connection with Peace

Paul begins each of his thirteen epistles with the words, “Grace to you and peace...,” adding the word “mercy” in I, II Timothy and Titus (*ref.* also I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2; II John 3; Jude 2; Rev. 1:4).

“Grace” *always appears FIRST*, for apart from God’s “grace” there can be *NO* “peace.” In this respect, “faith” as the means through which man is saved *can NO more* stand alone than “peace” can stand alone:

“For by *grace* are ye saved [‘you have been saved’] through *faith*...”
(Eph. 2:8a).

The three appearings of Christ in connection with *peace* parallel the three appearings of Christ in connection with *salvation*.

There are two aspects of a present peace, in connection with Christ’s past and present appearings; and there is a future peace, in connection with Christ’s future appearing.

1) Peace with God (Rom. 5:1)

God has established peace “through the blood of his [Christ’s]

cross" (Col. 1:20), allowing fallen man to have "peace with God" through justification "by faith" (Rom. 5:1). Apart from *justification*, peace between God and man CANNOT exist (Isa. 48:22; 57:21).

Saved man possesses a positional standing before God which is based entirely upon *the finished work of Christ*; and within this positional standing, wherein redeemed man possesses God's imputed righteousness, there is perfect peace.

2) Peace of God (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15)

The peace of God can exist ONLY after peace with God has been established. The peace of God has to do with fellowship between God and those who have *peace with Him through the blood of the Cross*. And Christ is presently ministering in the Holy of Holies, on the basis of His blood on the mercy seat, to allow redeemed man to conduct his pilgrim walk within the framework of this peace (I John 1:3-2:2).

Whether or not redeemed man possesses *the peace of God can have NO affect on his peace with God*. Apart from *the peace of God* though, one's servitude will be affected, producing dire present results and future consequences.

3) Universal Peace (Isa. 9:6, 7)

Christ's first appearance was to effect "peace with God" through *redemption*, not to bring about universal peace (Matt. 10:34; Luke 12:51). Universal peace awaits His reappearance on earth. Peace on earth today exists *ONLY* among those "in whom he is well pleased" (Luke 2:14, ASV), which would first necessitate *redemption*, for peace CANNOT exist between God and the unredeemed.

The Middle East is the center of unrest during the present day, particularly Jerusalem. However, the day is coming when *the Middle East will be the center of peace, particularly Jerusalem.*

"Jerusalem" means *city of peace*; and when the "Prince of peace" returns (Isa. 9:6), He will "speak peace unto the heathen [nations]" from this city as He holds the sceptre and rules from David's throne (Zech. 9:10; cf. Isa. 9:7).

ONLY THEN will the peace which presently eludes the nations exist among the nations on the earth (Ps. 122:6).

19

THOU GOOD, FAITHFUL SERVANT *Reward Exactly Commensurate with Service*

“And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:20-23).

“Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

And he said likewise to him, Be thou over five cities” (Luke 19:16-19).

Within the framework of the three appearances of Christ in Heb. 9:24-28, it *MUST* be recognized that no single appearance stands alone, isolated from the other two.

Christ's past appearance, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26), allows Him to presently "appear in the presence of God for us [appearing as High Priest for a redeemed people, ministering on the basis of His blood on the mercy seat for those in need of cleansing because of defilement through contact with the world in which they presently reside]" (v. 24).

And *Christ's past and present appearances* allow for a *future appearance* "without sin unto salvation [a 'salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' — 'the salvation of your souls' (I Peter 1:5, 9)]" (v. 28; cf. Heb. 10:37-39).

Salvation is for *a purpose*:

Christ appeared *the FIRST time*, providing redemption, to *make that purpose possible*.

He is *NOW* appearing in the presence of God, as High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary, to provide a present cleansing for those whom He has redeemed, *with that purpose in view*.

And He will *ONE DAY* return, reappear, "without sin unto salvation," *to bring that purpose to pass*.

God's purpose for redeeming man is the SAME as His purpose for creating man.

Man was created to possess dominion over the earth; and fallen man, in no position to exercise this dominion, has been redeemed with a view to fulfilling this purpose:

"...let them have dominion [Heb., *radah*, '...let the rule']" (Gen. 1:26, 28).

The "same Jesus" Who departed into heaven forty days following His resurrection is going to one day return *in the SAME manner that He went away* (Acts 1:11; cf. John 14:3).

Christ has gone away "to receive for himself a kingdom," and He will return *to take the reins of government AFTER He receives the kingdom* (Luke 19:12, 15).

At *THAT time* He will reckon with those whom He has redeemed and for whom He presently ministers. And *THIS reckoning* will

be with a view to placing those within His house in various positions of power, occupying the throne as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom.

It is THEN that man will possess the dominion of which God spoke in Gen. 1:26-28.

To Reckon with Them

The first order of business after Christ returns for His household servants will be *to reckon with these servants*. The Householder's servants will be removed from the earth to appear in His presence at what Scripture calls "the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10).

And it is here, at Christ's judgment seat, that "every man's work shall be made manifest."

Works, activities performed by those in the house during the time of the Householder's absence, will be tried "by ['in'] fire" to determine *the quality*. Works which endure the fire and remain, likened to "gold, silver, precious stones," will result in *a reward*; works consumed by the fire though, likened to "wood, hay, stubble," will result in *loss* (I Cor. 3:11-15).

1) Judgment for Those Having Already Been Judged

Christians have been justified, declared righteous, on the basis of Christ's past, finished work at Calvary (Rom. 5:15-19). And this justification occurred in past time, at the moment of belief.

In this respect, *it is NOT possible* for a Christian to ever appear in judgment where matters pertain to the salvation which he presently possesses. Judgment has already occurred. God judged sin — that which separates man from God — in the person of His Son, and *God is satisfied*.

The impossibility of a Christian ever coming into judgment though pertains strictly to *his eternal salvation*.

One's eternal destiny, at the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes a settled, closed matter; and for a Christian to ever be brought into judgment where the issue at hand pertains to his eternal destiny would be to bring into judgment once again that which God has already judged — *the finished work of His Son*.

Actually *there is NO such thing* as a future judgment — for either the saved or the unsaved — where the issue will involve eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

This *will NOT be, it CANNOT be*, an issue at the judgment seat of Christ where Christians appear at the end of this present dispensation, preceding both the Tribulation and the Millennium.

NOR will it be, *it CANNOT be*, an issue when the unsaved appear at the great white throne judgment following the Millennium.

In BOTH instances, judgment with respect to the eternal destiny of those being judged will have already occurred, with the issue already settled.

John 3:18 makes this very clear:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned [‘judged’] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

For the believer, *judgment is past*. Sin has been judged in the person of God’s Son; and sin’s penalty, which is death, has been paid.

For the unbeliever, *judgment is likewise past* (“condemned [‘judged’]” is the translation of a word [*krino*] appearing in the perfect tense in the Greek text, showing a judgment completed in past time with the results of this judgment presently existing in a finished state). The unbeliever has already been condemned; he has already been judged, and matters presently exist in this state.

(For God to judge the unbeliever on the basis of his eternal destiny would be for God to once again judge sin, which He has already judged in the person of His Son.

Though sin’s penalty, *death*, has already been paid on his behalf [though Christ has died, paid the price], it has not been received. He has not applied the blood; and, relative to the death of the firstborn, there is no vicarious death. The unsaved person, though judgment for sin is past, will still have to pay sin’s penalty. And he will have to do it himself.

Thus, insofar as one’s eternal destiny is concerned, *NO judgment awaits the believer or the unbeliever. Judgment is past for BOTH, with the eternal destiny of BOTH a closed matter, already determined on one basis alone — belief or unbelief — having occurred in time past.*

The difference between the saved and the unsaved relative to eternal verities lies in the fact that the One Who paid sin's penalty, *death*, has been accepted by one but not by the other. One has believed; the other has not believed. One, through a vicarious means, has had the penalty paid on his behalf; the other though, apart from this vicarious means, will have to pay the penalty himself.

Though judgment itself is past, the results of that judgment await a future time. For the saved, the results will be carried out in one manner [with no one excluded]; and for the unsaved, the results will be carried out in another manner [with no one excluded as well].)

2) *To Be Judged According to Works*

One should note very carefully that it is "works" which come under review at all future judgments in Scripture, *whether of the saved or the unsaved* (I Cor. 3:13-15; Rev. 20:12, 13; cf. Ezek. 20:34-38; 44:10-16; Matt. 25:34-36, 41-43; Rev. 20:4). And since *man's works can have NOTHING* to do with eternal salvation, something other than issues surrounding one's eternal destiny would have to be in view.

Or, to turn that around, since the eternal destiny of those being judged will have already been determined at any future judgment, *man's works* are the *ONLY possible thing* which could come under review, whether of the saved or the unsaved. There is *NOTHING else* which could be considered.

Those who believe, who are "not condemned ['not judged']" (for whom no judgment relative to eternal salvation awaits) will appear at one judgment; and *those who have NOT believed*, who have been "condemned already ['judged already']" (for whom no judgment relative to eternal salvation awaits as well) will appear at another judgment, entirely separate from that of the redeemed.

Judgment relating to eternal salvation or eternal damnation *MUST be a past matter in EVERY future judgment*, with individuals appearing at a particular judgment (of either the saved or the unsaved, never a combination of the two), *WHOLLY on the basis of THAT which has already been determined*.

According to the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, Christians will appear before Christ in judgment to ascertain *how MUCH each person has gained through trading and trafficking in the Lord's business during His time of absence* (Luke 19:15).

There is *NOTHING* whatsoever about judgment relating to one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation in these parables. Such would be an impossibility. These are parables showing the household servants, those in possession of eternal salvation (those who *CANNOT* be called into judgment relative to this matter), being called to an accounting by the Householder at the time of His return.

The Householder will gather "his own servants" before His judgment seat — the judgment seat of Christ — to reckon with them on the basis of their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out assigned duties in the house during the time of His absence (*works* emanate out of "faithfulness," and it is *works* which will come under review).

Faithfulness, producing works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones," will result in commendation and reward; and unfaithfulness, producing works comparable to "wood, hay, stubble," will result in rebuke and loss.

And that which will be in view, as an end result of this reckoning, has to do with the household servants either being accorded or being denied *positions of power and authority as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom*.

Insofar as the unsaved appearing at the great white throne in Rev. 20:11-15 is concerned, judicial issues relating to eternal salvation or eternal damnation likewise *CANNOT* come into view. Individuals not in possession of eternal life (those upon whom the wrath of God abides, who have already been judged relative to their unbelief) will be judged *on the basis of their own works*, with their *eternal destiny already a settled, closed matter*.

The judgment of the saved occurs before the Millennium, for *millennial issues are in view*. The judgment of the unsaved though does not occur until following the Millennium, for their judgment has *NOTHING* to do with the Millennium. Their judgment has to do with *the eternal ages ALONE*, and their judgment occurs immediately before the onset of these ages.

Have Thou Authority

Faithfulness in exercising one's household responsibilities

during the time of the Householder's absence will result in the household servant being accorded responsibility with his Lord in the kingdom. *Unfaithfulness* though will result in the household servant being denied such responsibility.

The principle connecting *faithfulness in present responsibility* with *being accorded future responsibility* was set forth by Christ in the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-13.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful...who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (vv. 10, 11).

The unjust steward, placed in charge of his Master's goods, had failed to faithfully discharge his duties concerning the use of these goods. The steward had not acted in a manner which would be to his Master's advantage, and, *through mismanagement*, he had wasted his Master's goods (v. 1).

The day arrived when the steward was called *to render an account concerning his stewardship*. The Householder had heard about the steward's unfaithfulness; and upon investigation, with the steward in His presence, the Householder found it necessary to take action which would remove him from the position which he held (v. 2).

The steward, when removed from his position and relieved of his household duties, would no longer hold a position of responsibility in the house. The Householder's goods *would NO longer be at his disposal*, for that which had previously been committed to his trust would have been taken from him.

Unfaithfulness in the discharge of his duties had resulted in his being brought to this position, *wherein he was about to be left with NOTHING*. And, though it is not so stated in the parable, this responsibility, in the light of that seen in the parables of the talents and pounds, would undoubtedly have then been given to another steward.

This, of course, would be the Lord's Own commentary on the unfaithful servant in the parable of the pounds or the parable of the talents.

The servant in each parable had been placed in charge of a portion of his Master's goods, but he exhibited unfaithfulness in the responsibility committed to his trust.

Then at the time of reckoning, *in his Master's presence*, that with which he had previously been entrusted, belonging to his Master, was taken from him and given to another (Matt. 25:28, 29; Luke 19:24-26), *leaving him with NOTHING.*

Revealed unfaithfulness in delegated responsibility in the house, in both parables, correspondingly resulted in a denial of responsibility in the kingdom.

(There is a further teaching concerning "repentance [a change of mind]" in the parable of the unjust steward. He was accorded time to bring about a change in that which he had done.

This though is not seen in the parables of the talents and pounds. Once the Master of the house has risen up and called his stewards to an accounting, the text is quite clear:

The door of opportunity will THEN be closed forever [Matt. 25:10; Luke 13:25]. "Time" for household servants [Christians] to bring about any type change simply will NOT exist beyond this point.)

In the parables of the talents and pounds, the inverse of that which the unfaithful servant in the parable of the unjust steward experienced was shown to be true by that which the faithful servants experienced. They had been faithful in delegated responsibility in the house; and, as a result, they were accorded responsibility with their Lord in the kingdom which He had gone away to receive.

And, in like fashion, the inverse of that which the Lord said about unfaithfulness in the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:11 would also be true. The Lord would commit to their trust "the true riches." They had been *faithful in lesser responsibility*, and they could be trusted, in like manner, to be *faithful in greater responsibility* (v. 10).

1) The Nature of Rewards

Being rewarded or suffering loss when Christ returns *will have to do with the KINGDOM which He has gone away to receive.*

Faithfulness in one's delegated responsibility as a servant in the

house now will result in the servant being elevated into *the position of ruler during that coming day and being accorded responsibility as a co-heir with Christ in His kingdom.*

However, *unfaithfulness in one's delegated responsibility as a servant in the house now will result in the servant being placed in a position during that coming day where he can NO longer even come in contact with the things of His Master.*

That with which he had been entrusted as a servant in the house will be taken from him, leaving him completely estranged from the things belonging to his Master. And for such an individual, because of irresponsibility, *there will be NO elevation into the position of ruler, being accorded responsibility as a co-heir with Christ in His kingdom.*

Relative to Christ's millennial reign and proffered positions with Him in His kingdom, *it will ALL be over. Christ's millennial reign is a one-time event which will NEVER be repeated.*

Christ's words, reserved for faithful servants, are very clear:

"...thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21, 23; cf. Luke 19:17, 19).

And the inverse of this is shown to be equally true relative to Christ's dealings with unfaithful servants (Matt. 25:24-30; cf. Luke 19:20-24). The same principle which had previously been set forth in the parable of the unjust steward is then reiterated in both the parables of the talents and the pounds:

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. 25:29; cf. Luke 19:26).

The key to the matter is *faithfulness to delegated responsibility.* Christ will elevate household servants into positions of rulership, allowing them to ascend the throne and occupy various appointed positions of power and authority as co-heirs with Him, *strictly on the basis of their prior faithfulness.*

NOTHING could be clearer than the Householder's Own words:

"...thou hast been faithful...I will make thee ruler."

2) *The Time of Rewards*

Events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ are viewed by some individuals as *ongoing events* which occur during and at the conclusion of the present dispensation rather than events which occur in their entirety at the conclusion of the dispensation.

Such a view is often advanced by its advocates in order to teach “selective rapture” (which itself takes various forms, teaching, after some fashion, that *only faithful Christians* will be removed from the earth at the time of the rapture).

This particular thought within the selective rapture teaching runs somewhat along the lines that Scripture is clear concerning the necessity for *ALL Christians* to appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10).

And if this judgment can be shown to be *an ongoing event* during the present dispensation, verses such as Phil. 3:11 (the “out-resurrection”) would have to be understood within the framework of a select group of Christians being raised at the time of the rapture, based on prior findings at the judgment seat.

However, *NEITHER* a present, ongoing judgment *NOR* a future, selective rapture of Christians is taught in Scripture. The parables of the talents and the pounds make this very clear.

(There are also a number of other passages which teach this same truth as well. See the author’s book, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, Chapter II, “We Must All Appear”).

In the parables of the talents and the pounds, the Householder *calls His servants to an accounting ONLY AFTER He receives the kingdom and returns. ONLY THEN does the Householder call His servants before Him to see how much EACH man has gained by trading.*

All of the household servants *appear TOGETHER in judgment at the SAME time;* and this “time” is clearly revealed to be *at the END of the present dispensation*, following the period when servants are accorded the privilege of exercising faithfulness to delegated responsibility.

Thus, Scripture *does NOT* teach that a separation of Christians occurs through a present, ongoing judgment, *for there is NO present judgment of this nature.*

NOR does Scripture teach that a separation of Christians will occur through a selective rapture, *for there will be NO selective rapture.*

Separation, according to Scripture, will occur *ONLY* at that future time when *ALL Christians (both the faithful and the unfaithful) appear before the judgment seat following Christ's return for His household servants.*

Christ is presently occupying the office of *High Priest, NOT that of Judge.* A judicial role falls *ONLY within the scope of His kingly office, NOT His priestly office* (to be a "King" is to be a *Judge*; and, although Christ is a King today [He was "born King" (Matt. 2:2)], He is *NOT* presently exercising that office or any facet of that office).

Christ will occupy the office and exercise the duties of King *ONLY AFTER* he concludes His present high priestly ministry.

At THAT time, He will depart the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary and come forth as *the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. ONLY THEN will He assume a judicial role of a nature seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds.*

3) *The Goal of Rewards*

After whatever fashion one views the Christian life during the present dispensation, *the goal of ALL activity is ALWAYS the same.*

Responsibility has been accorded household servants during the present time with a view to their being elevated and assuming responsible positions in the kingdom yet future. Training and testing occur today, with the outcome realized in the kingdom which follows.

This was graphically illustrated by the Apostle Paul through his viewing the Christian life as *a race, with the runner striving to acquire one or more crowns.*

Being elevated into the position of ruler and assuming a place as co-heir with Christ on His throne will require a crown. And Scripture connects *the crown and the throne after such a fashion that one CANNOT be separated from the other.*

Rulers do NOT govern apart from a throne, and uncrowned individuals do NOT sit on a throne.

Being invested with a crown portends an ascent to the throne, and being denied a crown or one's crown being taken portends

either a denial of or a removal from the throne (*cf.* Ps. 89:39, 44; Zech. 6:11, 13; Rev. 2:10, 26, 27; 3:21; 6:2; 12:3; 13:1, 2; 19:12, 16).

Five crowns which it is possible for Christians to win are mentioned in the New Testament.

These five crowns are:

- 1) "The incorruptible crown" (I Cor. 9:24-27).
- 2) "The crown of rejoicing" (I Thess. 2:19, 20).
- 3) "The crown of righteousness" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).
- 4) "The crown of life" (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
- 5) "The crown of glory" (I Peter 5:2-4).

These crowns, portending positions of power and authority with the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" during the coming age, are being held out before Christians during the present time.

These are the proffered rewards to be won in the present *race of the faith* as one exhibits faithfulness to the responsibility which has been delegated to him.

And these crowns, to be given strictly on the basis of faithfulness to present responsibility, will be worn by those Christians accorded responsible positions of power and authority in the kingdom.

Enter Thou into the Joy of Thy Lord

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith [*lit.*, 'the faith' (not 'our faith,' with the article used as a possessive pronoun)]; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1, 2).

"...I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21b, 23b).

"...have thou authority over ten cities...over five cities" (Luke 19:17b, 19b).

The "author and finisher of our faith ['the faith']," the One

we are to *look unto* as we *look away* from anything which could cause distraction, is described in Heb. 12:2 as One Who had His eyes fixed on “the joy that was set before him” as He bore “our sins in his own body on the tree” (I Peter 2:24).

Christ viewed Calvary within the framework of THAT which lay beyond Calvary.

The ignominious shame and indescribable sufferings of Calvary had to come first. *There was NO other way.*

But beyond Calvary lay something else, described as “the joy that was set before him.”

Following His resurrection, when Christ confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and other disciples later in Jerusalem, He called attention to a constant theme throughout the Old Testament Scriptures: Israel’s Messiah was going to *FIRST suffer these things* [events surrounding Calvary] and *THEN enter into His glory* (Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45).

Joseph, a type of Christ, first suffered prior to finding himself seated on Pharaoh’s throne ruling “over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 37:20ff; 39:20ff; 41:40ff).

Moses, another type of Christ, first suffered rejection at the hands of his people before being accepted by them. Rejection was followed by his experiences in Midian, and acceptance was followed by the people of Israel being led out of Egypt to be established in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 2:11ff; 3:1ff; 12:40, 41).

Passages such as Ps. 22-24 or Isa. 53:1ff (Israel’s future confession concerning that which had happened to the nation’s Messiah *BEFORE* He entered into His glory [Isa. 52]) present the same order — *sufferings, and THEN glory.*

This is the *ONLY order* one finds in Scripture, and enough is stated about Christ’s sufferings preceding His glory in the Old Testament that He could say to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus:

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have spoken:*
Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25, 26).

Peter, James, and John on the Mount with Christ during the time of His earthly ministry “saw his glory” (Luke 9:32), and Peter, years later, associated the “glory” which they had seen at this time with “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:16-18).

Christ’s “glory” thus has to do with that day when He will occupy the throne and rule the earth (as Joseph on the throne ruling Egypt [always a type of the world in Scripture]).

In Heb. 12:2, the wording is slightly different. In this passage we’re told that Christ’s “sufferings” preceded “the joy [rather than ‘the glory’]” set before Him.

This though, in complete keeping with Old Testament prophecy, is clearly a reference to “sufferings” preceding Christ’s “glory” and to Christ looking beyond the sufferings to the time when he would enter into His glory.

In the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14ff, Christ referred to individuals who would enter into positions of power and authority with Him as entering “into *the joy of thy Lord*” (vv. 21, 23; cf. Luke 19:16-19). Thus, the “sufferings” and “joy” of Heb. 12:2 follow the same order and refer to the same two things as the “sufferings” and “glory” found elsewhere in Scripture.

In keeping with the theme of Hebrews though, there’s really more to the expression, “the joy that was set before him,” than just a general foreview of Christ’s coming glory. The thought here is much more specific.

Note in the parable of the talents that “the joy of thy Lord” is associated with Christ’s co-heirs entering into positions on the throne with him.

And the key thought throughout Hebrews, stating the matter another way, is that of Christ “bringing many sons unto glory” with Him (2:10).

This is what Christ had His eyes fixed upon when He endured the humiliation, shame, and sufferings of Calvary (cf. Heb. 1:9). Christ, at Calvary, fixing His attention on “the joy that was set before him,” fixed His attention on that day when *He and His co-heirs, firstborn sons in that day, forming His bride, would ascend the throne together in His kingdom.*

1) *Endured the Cross*

Note something, and note it well!

It is *because of Calvary* that unredeemed man, “dead in trespasses and sins,” can be “quickened” (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). It is *because of Calvary* that unredeemed man can be eternally saved, changing once and for all his eternal destiny.

BUT, Christ looked beyond Calvary. He looked at *the purpose* for man’s redemption, *a purpose* which would allow redeemed man to realize the highest of all possible callings.

Christ viewed the events surrounding Calvary more in the light of Col. 1:13. Christ’s finished work on Calvary allows God to take fallen man and bring about a change in sides with respect to the kingdom. This allows God to take a man who is “dead in trespasses and sins,” produce life in that individual, and place him in the very sphere for which he had been created in the beginning.

And being more specific, Christ, through His work at Calvary, provided redemption for His bride, the one who would reign as consort queen with Him. Christ’s finished work at Calvary (Gen. 22) allows the Holy Spirit to presently call out a bride for the Son (Gen. 24). “Sufferings” *MUST come FIRST*, but the “joy” toward which Christ looked *MUST follow the sufferings*.

Christ “endured the cross,” knowing these things, with His eyes accordingly fixed on “the joy that was set before him.”

And man today, viewing Calvary apart from also looking ahead to this same “joy,” *is NOT* looking upon Christ’s redemptive work the same way Christ viewed it at all.

2) *Despised the Shame*

Christ, “for the joy that was set before him,” *NOT ONLY* endured the Cross *BUT* He despised the shame. The word “for” in this verse — “for the joy” — is a translation of the Greek word *anti*, which refers to setting one thing over against another. The “joy” was set over against the “shame.” Christ considered the ignominious “shame” associated with Calvary a thing of little consequence compared to the “joy” which lay ahead. *The ignominious “shame” was NO small thing, BUT the “joy” was so much greater that, comparatively, Christ could ONLY look upon the former as of little consequence.*

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

He then went to Calvary, paying the price for man's redemption, so that even the very ones carrying out His persecution and crucifixion could one day (through believing on Him) find themselves in a position to participate in the "joy" set before Him.

And a Christian should view present persecution, humiliation, and shame after the same fashion Christ viewed these things at Calvary. This is what Peter had in mind when he penned the words, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

The Epistles of I, II Peter have been written to encourage Christians who are being tested and tried; and this encouragement is accomplished through offering compensation for the sufferings which one endures during the present time. And this compensation — rewards having to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son's kingdom — will be *EXACTLY* commensurate with present sufferings (I Peter 1:6, 7; 4:12, 13; cf. Matt. 16:27).

(Note that the "sufferings" in I, II Peter, resulting in future rewards, appear in connection with *an inheritance* "reserved in heaven" and *a salvation* "ready to be revealed in the last time," which is "the salvation of your souls" [I Peter 1:4, 5, 9].)

Following the example which Christ set at Calvary, a Christian should place the *coming* "joy" over against the *present* "sufferings" and consider the sufferings of little consequence compared to "the just recompense of the reward" which lies ahead.

And he should not think it strange when he finds himself suffering for Christ's sake, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (cf. II Tim. 3:12; I Peter 4:12).

THIS is the NORM for the Christian life!

Rather, he should rejoice, knowing that as a *partaker of Christ's sufferings*, he is *ALSO going to be a partaker of Christ's glory* (I Peter 4:13).

20

THOU WICKED, SLOTHFUL SERVANT *Reward Exactly Commensurate with Service*

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reaped where I sowed not, and gathered where I had not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath” (Matt. 25:24-29).

“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

And he said unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him" (Luke 19:20-26).

The Lord's dealings with His household servants as set forth in the parables of the talents and the pounds are often treated by expositors as pertaining to issues surrounding one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation. However, such is *NOT ONLY* theologically impossible *BUT* teachings of this nature also serve to do away with that which is actually taught.

NO one — saved or unsaved — will EVER stand in a future judgment where the issue at hand will involve eternal salvation or eternal damnation. In EVERY future judgment, the matter of one's possession or nonpossession of eternal salvation will be a PAST issue, with judgment having ALREADY occurred:

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

This is the reason that a judgment relative to eternal salvation *CANNOT* await either the believer or the unbeliever. *Both have ALREADY been judged relative to this matter (ref. Chapter XIX in this book).*

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [e.g., Gen. 22; Ex. 12; Isa. 53] (I Cor. 15:3b).

God has ALREADY judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary. The one believing has had the penalty for sin paid on his behalf; the one not believing will have to one day pay the penalty himself. BUT, regardless, judgment for sin is PAST.

The believer will one day stand before Christ and be judged on the basis of *works* (or, the matter can be stated as "faithfulness," for works emanate out of faithfulness [Heb. 11:1ff; James 2:14-26]). And this judgment will be with *the Millennium in view* (I Cor. 3:11-15; I Peter 5:1-10; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

The unbeliever, as well, will one day stand before Christ and be judged on the basis of *works* (“faithfulness,” of course, *CANNOT* be an issue, with works emanating out of faithfulness, as with the believer; but there will be works nonetheless, though works completely separate from faith). And this judgment will be with *the eternal ages in view* (Rev. 20:11-15).

The salvation question — the question regarding one’s eternal salvation or damnation — will be a closed, finished matter at the time of judgment (for the saved, or the unsaved), *for NO man can EVER be judged on the basis of that which God has already judged* (the same concept, in another frame of reference, is absolute protection from “double jeopardy” in the U.S. Constitution).

“Salvation” will be an issue in the Lord’s reckoning with His servants as set forth in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, *but NOT eternal salvation*. The matter at hand concerns the Lord’s dealings with His household servants on the basis of works emanating out of faithfulness in view of a future salvation — *the salvation of the soul*.

One’s presently possessed salvation — the salvation of the spirit — places him within the house, allowing him to occupy a responsible position under and for the Householder. *It is his faithfulness or unfaithfulness to delegated responsibility for which he will one day answer, NOT his presence in the house*.

In the parables of the talents and the pounds, the “wicked and slothful” servant *was NOT ONLY* present in the house *BUT* he occupied a household position of the same order as those held by the “good and faithful” servants. *He was one of the Householder’s Own servants* and had been assigned responsibility within the house, just as those servants who later proved to be faithful.

The distinguishing difference in the servants had to do with *their attitude toward delegated responsibility*. *Two were shown to have been faithful, and one was shown to have been unfaithful*.

To press the issue beyond this point and attempt to read eternal salvation and eternal damnation into the matter does violence to the Scripture, *NOT ONLY* at this point *BUT* elsewhere as well.

In both parables, the Householder’s servants were accorded responsible positions *in the SAME location* (in the house) *during the*

SAME time (the present dispensation); and this was followed by the servants rendering an account *at the SAME time* (the end of the present dispensation) *in their Lord's presence* (before His judgment seat).

That is, *ALL of the stewards served together in the SAME place at the SAME time, and they were ALL called forth together to render an account in the SAME place at the SAME time.*

Major problems exist on every hand when one attempts to view issues in these parables as pertaining to eternal salvation or eternal damnation. Such would necessitate the Lord calling saved and unsaved individuals alike into His service to exercise responsible positions in His house, followed by *the SAME saved and unsaved individuals one day appearing before Him, at the SAME time and place, to render an account.*

Then, there's the matter of the basis upon which household servants are judged following their being called forth to render an account. *Judgment occurs SOLELY on the basis of faithfulness to delegated responsibility.*

Then, beyond that is the matter of the outcome of this judgment, which has to do with the servants either being commended and rewarded or being rebuked and suffering loss *in relation to occupying or being denied positions in the kingdom which the Householder had gone away to receive, NOT in relation to eternal salvation or eternal damnation.*

An individual *MUST* be a servant in the house before responsibility can be delegated by the Householder. The impossibility of an unsaved person occupying a position of this nature can be easily seen by understanding Matt. 24:45 in the light of I Cor. 2:14.

In Matt. 24:45, a household servant was given the responsibility of providing food for other servants in the house. He was to give them "meat in due season," which has to do with *Biblical doctrine, particularly doctrine surrounding the Lord's return and the coming kingdom* (ref. Chapter XI in this book). Other servants in the house were to understand and receive this message, something, which according to I Cor. 2:14, *would NOT be possible for unsaved individuals.*

(Contextually, I Cor. 2:14 has to do with saved man following his soulical nature; applied to unsaved man, the soulical is all that he has.)

The things of the Spirit of God are *foolishness* to the “natural man [‘soulical man’ — a person whose life is dominated by his soul].” Such a person *CANNOT* receive *NOR* understand the things of the Spirit, for they are “spiritually discerned.”

An unsaved person *does NOT* possess a saved human spirit into which the message can be received; *NOR* does he possess the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead him “into all truth” (*cf.* John 3:6; 16:13-15; James 1:21).

Then, to say that eternal salvation and eternal damnation are in view in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds necessitates the saved and unsaved appearing in judgment together, something completely foreign to the teaching of all Scripture. A judgment of the saved and unsaved together, at the same time, would require God to judge (at least after some fashion) once again that which He has already judged. Since such *CANNOT* occur, Scripture *ALWAYS* presents separate judgments for saved and unsaved individuals, with the matter at hand *ALWAYS* an issue other than eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

As previously seen, the issue surrounding one’s eternal destiny in any future judgment will ALWAYS be a settled, closed matter before judgment occurs.

Further, those rendering an account in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds either experience commendation and reward or experience rebuke and loss, with the faithful being accorded positions with Christ in the kingdom and the unfaithful being denied positions of this nature. And to read eternal verities into such a division would *NOT ONLY* suggest that all Christians will be found faithful at the judgment seat *BUT* it would also suggest a parallel equivalence between positions with Christ in the kingdom on the one hand and one’s eternal destiny on the other.

I Corinthians 3:11-15 clearly reveals that Christians at the judgment seat will experience both “reward” and “loss,” a thought perfectly in line with that which is revealed in both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds; and the subject matter in both parables clearly has to do with “reward” or “loss” in relation to *the kingdom*, *NOT with acceptance or rejection relative to one’s eternal destiny.*

The “wicked and slothful” *servant* in each parable, unlike the “good and faithful” *servants*, failed to properly exercise delegated responsibility in the house. *Failure* resulted in “loss.” *NOT ONLY* was that which had been committed to his trust, belonging to the Householder, taken from him and given to another, *BUT* he was rejected for a position in the kingdom which the Householder had gone away to receive.

Unfaithfulness to delegated responsibility in the house during the Householder’s absence resulted in his being denied responsibility in the kingdom following the Householder’s return (cf. Luke 16:10, 11).

This is what the text CLEARLY states, and this is what MUST be understood from the text.

Called into His Presence

After Christ receives the kingdom from His Father, He is going to return for His household servants. They will be called forth from the earth to appear in His presence in the heavens. The “dead in Christ” will be raised, followed by those “which are alive and remain” being removed with the resurrected believers “to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thess. 4:13-17; I Cor. 15:51-57).

The Greek word *atomos*, translated “moment” (I Cor. 15:52), is used to show the length of time which the Lord will use to accomplish the removal of His servants from the earth (both the dead and the living) into His presence in the heavens above the earth. *Tomos* means “division,” and the prefix “*a*” negates the word. Thus, *atomos*, from which the English word “atom” is derived, means “indivisible.”

This word in I Cor. 15:52 refers to *time which has been reduced to such a minute point that it can be reduced no further*. The reference is to events occurring during a space of time comparable to what we might think of as a microsecond (one-millionth of a second), events occurring so suddenly and swiftly that the brevity of time which will be involved is something completely beyond our finite comprehension.

The removal of Christians at the time of the rapture is *NOT* the same as the servants being called before Him to render an

account as set forth in Luke 19:15. Appearing in Christ's presence at the time of the rapture is *a general appearance*, but appearing in His presence at the judgment seat is *a more specific, personal appearance*. The latter follows the former.

At the time of the rapture, the present dispensation will have run its course. God's purpose for this dispensation — to acquire the rulers who will occupy responsible positions with Christ in the kingdom, forming His bride — will be complete.

ALL Christians (both the dead and the living) will then be removed from the earth, with a view to bringing matters surrounding the present dispensation to a close. They will be removed into Christ's presence at the time of the rapture and subsequently appear before Him, on an individual basis, to ascertain "how much every man had gained by trading" (Luke 19:15).

The text in both the parables of the talents and the pounds specifically states that *each servant* — *both faithful and unfaithful* — *personally "came" to the Lord in successive order to render an account concerning his stewardship* (Matt. 25:20, 22, 24; Luke 19:16, 18, 20).

The man with the five talents came and *stood ALONE in his Lord's presence*, and the Lord dealt with him *ALONE, on an individual basis*.

Then, in successive order, the man with the two talents came forth, followed by the man with the one talent.

In each instance, the Lord's dealings with those in His house *were the SAME* — dealings of a *personal, individual nature*.

And *the SAME sequence of events* within the Lord's judicial dealings with His servants is seen in the parable of the pounds.

At the future judgment of Christians, as set forth by these parables, each Christian — both faithful and unfaithful — will come forth, *separate from ALL others, and stand ALONE in his Lord's presence in order to respond to ONE matter: faithfulness as a household servant to delegated responsibility*.

The Christian will *personally* answer to the One Who had previously purchased him with His Own blood (allowing him to occupy a position as a servant in the house), placed him in a certain position with a specific calling (a particular position of servitude in the house), and provided him with the means whereby he could carry out the task at hand (provided him with His Own goods).

The Christian *can THEN EITHER show how he had used the talents/pound to the Householder's advantage* (Matt. 25:20, 22; Luke 19:16, 18), *OR he can attempt to show cause why he had NOT used the talents/pound to the Householder's advantage* (Matt. 25:24, 25; Luke 19:20, 21).

In either instance, the Lord's judgment will be perfectly just and righteous. Findings at the judgment seat of an individual nature will THEN determine positions with Christ in the kingdom of a like individual nature.

Commendation and reward or chastisement and loss will be completely commensurate with EXACTLY how the Christian either managed or mismanaged the Lord's goods within the scope of his individual calling.

Receiving a Just Recompense

In both the parables of the talents and the pounds, the distinguishing difference in servitude, revealed in the Householder's presence, in each instance, had to do with the servant's *use or nonuse of his Master's goods through trading and trafficking during the time of his Master's absence.*

In each parable, two servants were shown to have brought forth different amounts of increase through *a proper use of their Master's goods*, while another servant was shown to have brought forth no increase at all through *nonuse of his Master's goods.*

The servant bringing forth NO increase, in each parable, had stored his Master's goods for safekeeping in a place where they could NOT be used. The servant in the parable of the talents had buried his Master's goods in the ground (Matt. 25:25), and the servant in the parable of the pounds had placed his Master's goods inside a napkin (Luke 19:20).

In BOTH instances, NO increase could be realized.

The use of the Master's goods (resulting in an increase) or the nonuse of these goods (resulting in NO increase) is the central thought around which everything in both parables moves at the time the Master's servants are called into his presence to render an account.

A misuse of these goods does not really come under consideration per se, though this is something which Christ had previously discussed in the presence of His disciples, recorded in the parable

of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1ff. In this parable, the *SAME* appearance before his Master, the *SAME* accounting relative to his stewardship, and the *SAME* end result were experienced by the servant through *misuse* as experienced by the servants through *nonuse* in the parables of the talents and the pounds.

In the parable of the unjust steward, word had reached the Householder concerning His steward's misuse of His goods; and the steward was subsequently called into the Householder's presence to render an account concerning his stewardship. His mismanagement, brought out into the open while *in his Master's presence*, resulted in rebuke and impending loss.

He was about to lose his stewardship. That which had previously been committed to his trust was about to be removed from his possession; *and, once removed, he could NO longer act on his Master's behalf within the house* (Luke 16:1, 2).

EXACTLY the same principle can be seen in the parables of the talents and the pounds. In each parable, the servant who had hidden his Master's goods for safekeeping and *NOT* used them was called into his Master's presence to render an account. And that which was revealed, while *in his Master's presence*, resulted in *rebuke and loss*.

His stewardship was supposed to have been the means through which he could have successfully run the race of the faith. He, as a household steward in possession of a portion of the Householder's goods, *through faithfulness to his calling (his particular place of responsibility in the house)*, could bring forth an increase (bring forth fruit).

This would allow him *to win a crown, qualifying him to be elevated into the position of co-heir with his Master in the kingdom which He had gone away to receive*.

However, *failure in stewardship* would mean *rejection as ruler*. The unfaithful steward *would be rejected as unfit to occupy a position in the kingdom, with chastisement following (note the one received alongside or the one turned away [rejected] in the first of the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse)*.

The Lord *will NOT take lightly* the matter of household servants, through unfaithfulness, spurning proffered positions as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom which He has gone away to receive.

Unfaithful servants will receive treatment of such a harsh nature at the hands of their Lord that many students of the Word turn completely away from the thought of saved individuals being in view. To them it is unthinkable that the Lord would extend treatment of this nature to redeemed individuals, His Own people.

This is the main reason that issues surrounding one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation are often read into the parables of the talents and the pounds, with the unfaithful servant in each parable being looked upon as an unsaved individual.

However, the question concerning how the Lord could extend treatment of the nature revealed in these parables to one of His Own *does NOT address the issue at all*. The question asked in a proper Biblical framework would have to be just the opposite:

“HOW could the Lord be perfectly just and righteous WITHOUT extending treatment of this nature to one of His Own?”

IF faithfulness calls for commendation and reward (which it does), then unfaithfulness *MUST* call for rebuke and loss (which it does). The inverse of one *MUST* be true relative to the other, *else the Lord's perfect justice and righteousness could NOT be satisfied*.

The Servants' Plea

The unfaithful servants in both the parables of the talents and the pounds are seen pleading their individual cases before the Lord in a frank, open, and unrestrained manner. *NOTHING appears to be held back as they relate the reasons for the particular course of action which each had taken while a servant in the Master's house in charge of a portion of the Master's goods*.

The appeal by each servant *is NOT* that of trying to hide or cover up what he had done. To the contrary, it is just the opposite. They both appeal to their Lord, while in His presence, *in an open, almost brazen manner, relating EXACTLY what had occurred*.

In that coming day, *NOTHING will be held back*. *ALL things will be “naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”* (Heb. 4:13). Christ spoke openly during His earthly ministry, saying *NOTHING* in secret (John 18:20); and He would

expect the same from His servants, though the situation is often quite different today.

However, the day is coming when *NOTHING will remain hidden or be kept secret* (Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17). Paul, in his message to those at Rome, stated,

“...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

(Paul proclaimed both *the gospel of the grace of God* and *the gospel of the glory of Christ* [Acts 20:24-27; II Cor. 4:3, 4]; but the reference in Rom. 2:16 can pertain only to *the gospel of the glory of Christ*, for *NO* future judgment of the “secrets of men” awaits individuals in relation to *the gospel of the grace of God*.

Paul’s gospel in this passage [and elsewhere in the Pauline epistles where the expressions “my gospel” or “our gospel” appear] *MUST* be looked upon as the good news concerning the coming glory of Christ [“meat in due season”], to be proclaimed *to stewards in the house* [cf. Matt. 24:45; Rom. 16:25; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:1-6; I Thess. 1:5; II Thess. 2:14; I Tim. 1:11; II Tim. 2:8].

This gospel [good news] deals with the message concerning present faithfulness of household servants in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom [e.g., note the context of II Tim. 2:8].)

The unfaithful servants in both the parables of the talents and the pounds accused their Lord of the same thing in order to justify their nonuse of the goods entrusted to their care. They accused their Lord of reaping a harvest and deriving an increase through the labors of others, which was true but completely one-sided from their perspective.

They looked upon the entire matter from a carnal, humanistic viewpoint, rejecting spiritual values. They envisioned their Lord doing these things *ONLY for self-gain*, and they gave *LITTLE or NO thought to the revealed REASON* (which they should have known) concerning why the Householder was conducting affairs in His house after this fashion.

The Householder had a relationship with His servants of this nature for a *PURPOSE involving FAR more than just self-gain*,

as supposed by the unfaithful servants. The Householder, *for a particular REASON*, had delivered His goods to His servants and assigned them responsible positions in the house, with a view to their bringing forth an increase (bringing forth fruit).

Servitude during the present day of trials and testings would be *the MEANS through which the Householder could one day elevate His servants from positions in the house to positions in the kingdom.*

They, through faithfulness in lesser responsibility would be allowed to show themselves qualified to assume greater responsibility (cf. Matt. 25:29; Luke 16:10-12; 19:26); and upon the Householder's reception of the kingdom and return in possession of the kingdom, *those servants having shown themselves qualified could be elevated FROM household servants of their Master TO co-heirs with their Master.*

The self-gain which the Householder would eventually realize was that of gaining co-heirs, companions (which will form His wife as well), to ascend the throne with Him in His kingdom; and the Householder had reaped where He had not sown and gathered where He had not dispersed in order to bring this to pass.

The work in the fields was to be accomplished *by the servants, using the Master's possessions* (everything belonged to the Master of the house); and the work was to be accomplished *on the Master's behalf.*

The Householder, through this MEANS, was extending to His servants the privilege of one day being elevated to the highest position of honor and glory one could possibly receive. They would be recompensed for their labors by being elevated into positions as co-heirs with Him in the kingdom.

The fruits of their labors would NOT ONLY benefit the Householder BUT the servants as well, with the Householder and His servants both realizing the results together.

The Lord's Response

The thought of labor for the Lord during the present day in view of co-heirship with Him during that coming day *is something which appears to have completely escaped the attention of the unfaithful servants in both parables.*

The unfaithful servants *could NOT* grasp at all what their Master had in mind through requiring labor on His behalf. Ignorance of His plans and purposes for both present and future times *NOT ONLY* led them into gross error *BUT* it caused them to govern their activities as household servants after such a fashion that they mismanaged the Householder's affairs, ultimately resulting in their being rejected for positions in the kingdom.

There was *NO increase for their Master*, resulting in *NO advancement for them*.

The profitless servants in both parables *had FAILED* to properly conduct their affairs within the scope of delegated household responsibility. They *had NOT* used the talent/pound to bring forth an increase (Matt. 25:27; Luke 19:23 ["usury" in these verses is the translation of a Greek word meaning *interest on an investment*]).

The Lord's sharp rebuke, followed by chastisement, was occasioned by the dual ramifications resulting from the servants' disobedience. Appearing in the Lord's presence as profitless servants meant:

- 1) *No gain for the Lord.*
- 2) *Loss for the servants.*

Because of the servants' failure, those portions of the Lord's goods which had previously been entrusted to their care were taken from them and given to servants who had already been judged and had been shown to have brought forth increases. Such would add to these faithful servants' possessions, *which could ONLY positively reflect on their positions in the kingdom*.

The thought *can ONLY be* that servants coming into possession of *additional amounts of the Lord's goods* through this means will receive *additional responsibility in the kingdom*.

The principle governing this matter is set forth very succinctly in both parables:

"For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance [which can only be a reference to the servant bringing forth an increase of that which his Master had entrusted to him, resulting

in an 'abundance' in the kingdom]; but from him who *has nothing* [NO increase of the Master's goods entrusted to him], even what he has shall be taken away [which, in view of that realized by the faithful servant through a reception of the unfaithful servant's goods, *could ONLY* refer to the responsibility that could have been his in the kingdom through realizing the purpose for his salvation and particular calling]" (Matt. 25:29, Weymouth).

"I tell you that every one who has anything, more shall be given; and from him who has not anything, even what he has shall be taken away" (Luke 19:26, Weymouth).

The faithful servant will have already been elevated into a position as co-heir with his Lord at this time, and an increase in the Lord's goods, of the nature this would produce, is shown in the parable of the pounds to be directly related to *increased responsibility in the kingdom* (Luke 19:16-19).

Numerous positions in the kingdom which the Lord has gone away to receive *MUST be filled upon His return*. The failure of a servant to show himself qualified *will NOT* leave the position which could have been his unfilled. The Lord will simply assign that portion to another servant, adding to the responsibility which that servant will have already been accorded.

When all factors are considered, *NO* other meaning can really be derived from the Lord's action of taking from one servant and giving to another servant at the judgment seat.

Concluding Remarks:

A major problem in Christian circles today is the widespread ignorance concerning the relationship between *the present dispensation* and *the coming kingdom*. Pastors, over the years, *have NOT* dispensed "meat in due season"; and the ultimate result will be the appearance of multitudes of Christians before the Lord, at His judgment seat, in the same condition as the unfaithful servants in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds.

Ignorance of the Lord's plans and purposes can very easily result in a present mismanagement of household affairs, which will result in disqualification for a future management of affairs in the kingdom.

21

CAST OUTSIDE

Finality of Unfaithful Household Service

“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30).

The nature of the treatment awaiting the unfaithful servant at the hands of his Lord in the parable of the talents has been completely misunderstood by numerous Christians, leading them to conclude that the Lord was dealing with an unsaved person at this point in the parable.

The Lord sharply rebuked the unfaithful servant, commanded that the talent be removed from his possession, and then commanded that he be cast into the darkness outside.

The main problem which most Christians have with the latter part of this parable is the ultimate outcome of the Lord’s dealings with His unfaithful servant — the fact that he was cast into *the darkness outside*. “Outer darkness,” within their way of thinking, is to be equated with *Hell* (seen in an ultimate respect as the final abode of the unsaved in *the lake of fire*).

And knowing that a Christian *can NEVER* be cast into Hell — for the one in whom the Spirit has breathed life possesses a life which *can NEVER* be taken from him — those equating “outer darkness” with *Hell* are left with no recourse other than to look upon the Lord’s dealings with the unfaithful servant and the Lord’s dealings with the unsaved as synonymous.

It probably goes without saying that had the Lord treated the unfaithful servant in a somewhat less severe fashion, very few Christians reading this account would ever think about questioning the individual’s salvation, for the response of the unfaithful servant would be perfectly in line with verses such as I Cor. 3:13, 15 and would have presented no indication, in their way of viewing matters, of the status of his salvation.

But the Lord's sharp rebuke, the removal of the talent from his possession, and his being cast into outer darkness constitute what many view as *a sequence of events which could NOT possibly befall a Christian.*

Such an outlook on this passage though is completely contrary to any Biblical teaching on salvation by grace through faith (seeing the possession or nonpossession of this salvation through man's works, actions).

Or, such an outlook on the passage, as well, ignores both the text and the context, resulting in an interpretation which, contextually, is completely contrary to that seen in this passage or in any other similar passage in Scripture.

And by forcing erroneous interpretations of the preceding nature on this passage, the door will have been opened for all types of erroneous interpretations in related passages of Scripture.

Just to name a few, the door will have been opened for the introduction of:

- 1) Erroneous views pertaining to salvation by grace through faith.
- 2) Erroneous views on the purpose for the present dispensation.
- 3) Erroneous views on the coming judgment of Christians.
- 4) Erroneous views on the perfect justice and righteousness of God.

Then, if introducing erroneous views of the preceding nature in different realms of Biblical doctrine through a forced, noncontextual interpretation is not enough in and of itself, something else should be noted.

Such an outlook on the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 will, as well, close the door to the correct interpretation of this complete, overall passage — *the ONLY one which can possibly be derived through any plain, contextual reading of the passage.*

Error will have fostered error and closed doors, leaving the student of Scripture adhering to erroneous systems of thought and in *a position where he CANNOT possibly understand aright the Lord's present and future dealings with His household servants.*

A Darkness on the Outside

The expression “outer darkness” only appears three times in Scripture, and all three are found in Matthew’s gospel (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Luke, in his gospel, alludes to outer darkness in a parallel reference to Matt. 8:11, 12 (Luke 13:28, 29) but does not use the words. He simply reduces the expression to “without” (ASV).

In the Greek text, both Matthew and Luke use the compound word *ekballo*, which means to “cast out” (*ek*, “out”; *ballo*, “to cast”). Following the use of this word, the place into which individuals in these passages are cast is given in both gospels.

In Matthew’s gospel, the place where individuals are cast is described as “into outer darkness [*lit.*, from the Greek text, ‘into the darkness, the outer’; or as we would normally say in an English translation, ‘into the outer darkness’].”

(In the Greek text there are definite articles before both the noun and adjective, with the adjective following the noun — “the darkness, the outer.” In a construction of this nature, through a repetition of the article, there is an emphasis placed on the adjective, “outer.”

It is not just any darkness, but a particular darkness. It is a particular place of darkness outside and contiguous to a particular place of light.)

Then, in Luke’s gospel the place where individuals are cast is described as “without,” or “on the outside.” That is, through comparing Matthew’s account, they are cast “without,” or “on the outside” of a place of light; and this place, in Matthew’s gospel, is described as a place of darkness.

Accordingly, many Christians in that day will find themselves in the darkness outside the lighted banquet hall (Matt. 22:9-13); and these same Christians will, as well, subsequently find themselves outside the scope of the rule and reign of the One Who said, “I am the light of the world” (Matt. 8:11, 12; 25:19-30; John 9:5).

And the expressed thoughts by both Matthew and Luke locate this place immediately outside and contiguous to the region from which those in view are cast. Both passages refer to the same place — *a particular region of darkness outside a particular region of light.*

The place from which these individuals are cast is one of light.

This is possibly illustrated best in Matthew chapter twenty-two. In this chapter, “outer darkness” is used to describe conditions in an area immediately outside the festivities attendant a royal wedding. Such festivities in the East would normally be held at night, inside a lighted banqueting hall. On the outside there would be a darkened courtyard; and the proximity of this darkened courtyard to the lighted banqueting hall would correspond perfectly to the expression, “the outer darkness,” or “the darkness on the outside.”

A person in the banqueting hall, cast into the courtyard, would be cast out of the light into the darkness. This is the picture, and this is *EXACTLY* what will occur in relation to that which is being dealt with in Matt. 8:11, 12; 22:1-14; 25:14-30 — *i.e., cast out of the marriage festivities and out of the kingdom which follows.*

“Outer darkness” is simply one realm immediately outside of another realm, called “outer darkness” by way of contrast to the “inner light.” Those cast out are removed from a sphere associated with *light* and placed *outside* in a sphere associated with *darkness*.

Following events of the judgment seat of Christ, servants having been shown *faithful* and servants having been shown *unfaithful* will find themselves in *TWO entirely different realms.*

Servants having been shown *faithful* will find themselves among those forming the bride of Christ and in a position to attend the marriage festivities. And these individuals *will subsequently be positioned on the throne as co-heirs with Christ, forming the consort queen who will reign with the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”*

Servants having been shown *unfaithful* though *will NOT* form part of the bride; *NOR* will they be allowed to attend the marriage festivities; *NOR* will they be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ. Rather, they will find themselves *in a place outside the realm where these activities occur.*

They will *be removed from the inner light* (be removed from a place associated with events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ which follows) and *be cast into the darkness outside* (be cast into a place separated from events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ which follows).

This is *the way* “outer darkness” is used in Scripture; and this is *the ONLY way* the expression is used.

ANY teaching concerning “outer darkness,” remaining true to the text, *MUST approach the subject ONLY from a textual and contextual fashion of this nature, recognizing the subject matter at hand.*

Contextual Considerations

The Gospel of Matthew outlines a sequence of events pertaining to Israel and the kingdom, which anticipate the existence of the Church, after a manner not seen in the other three gospels.

The central message in Matthew’s gospel, leading up to the events surrounding Calvary, pertains to:

The offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel.

The rejection of the kingdom by Israel.

The removal of the kingdom from Israel.

These things, in turn, anticipate the Church subsequently being called into existence to be *the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*

Matthew presents God dealings with *the house of Israel* in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, with *the house* ultimately being left “desolate” because of the nation’s rejection (Matt. 23:2, 13, 38); and Matthew also anticipates God dealings with *a house* separate and distinct from Israel in relation to the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 16:18, 19; 21:33-43; 24:40-25:30). It is within this framework, along with individual contextual settings, that Christ’s three references to “outer darkness” are to be understood in Matthew’s gospel.

1) Matthew 8:11, 12

The first appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in Matt. 8:11, 12, and the text and context both have to do with *the message of the kingdom.* Jesus had just finished a lengthy discourse to His disciples, commonly called “The Sermon on the Mount” (chs. 5-7), which is *a connected discourse dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens* (cf. Matt. 5:1-12; 6:33; 7:13-27).

Preceding the Sermon on the Mount, the subject matter concludes in chapter four with the message concerning the kingdom. Then, the subject matter continues in chapter eight, following the Sermon on the Mount, with this same message concerning the kingdom.

The message at this point actually picks up where chapter four left off — with supernatural, physical healings, and later with supernatural provision. These supernatural, physical healings appear before, in conjunction with, and after the text concerning the kingdom of the heavens and outer darkness in chapter eight. Then accounts of supernatural material provisions for the people follow (e.g., Mark 6:32-44; John 2:1-11).

These miraculous works of Christ among the Jewish people were *SIGNS having to do with "the kingdom"* (cf. Isa. 35:1ff; Matt. 4:23-25; 10:5-8; 11:2-5). They constituted the credentials of the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom and pointed to that which Israel could have — *supernatural healing* (for both the people and the land [cf. II Chron. 7:14; Isa. 1:4-9]), *supernatural provision, and the restoration of the theocracy* — *IF the nation would repent.*

It is within a contextual setting such as this that "outer darkness" first appears in Matthew's gospel.

Actually, the subject arose after a Roman centurion expressed faith that Christ could heal his servant (who was sick at home) by just speaking the word. Christ used the faith exhibited by this Gentile to illustrate a contrasting lack of faith exhibited by those in Israel. Christ said that He had "not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (v. 10). He then spoke of a day when *many* would come "from the east and the west" and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the heavens."

That is, a separate and distinct group of individuals, taken mainly from the Gentiles, would exhibit faith on the same order as this centurion and enter into the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

But those to whom this heavenly sphere of the kingdom naturally belonged, because of their lack of faith, would be excluded. The "sons of the kingdom [those forming the nation of Israel]" would be "cast out" (vv. 11, 12).

The entire scene anticipated Matt. 21:43 where the heavenly portion of the kingdom was taken from Israel in view of a sepa-

rate and distinct group ultimately occupying that which did not naturally belong to them. This group would be comprised of those who, at that time, were *aliens, without hope, and without God (i.e., Gentiles)*. But “in Christ Jesus” these conditions would change. They would be “made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

And, through the immersion in the Spirit, those having been “made nigh by the blood of Christ” would become *new creations* “in Christ,” part of *the one new man*, who is “neither Jew nor Greek [‘Gentile’].” Then, through being “in Christ” (Who is Abraham’s Seed), they, through this positional standing, would become “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise [the heavenly portion of the promise given to Abraham and his progeny, which was taken from Israel]” (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:17, 18, 26-29; Eph. 2:12-15; cf. Gen. 22:17, 18).

2) Matthew 22:1-14

The second appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two. The contextual usage in this passage is in association with *the kingdom of the heavens and the activities attendant a royal wedding*.

Contextually, the “King” and His “Son” (v. 2) *can ONLY be identified as God the Father and God the Son*. The “servants” and “other servants” (vv. 3, 4) sent “to call them that were bidden [Israel]” *would then refer to the ministries of the prophets*.

This offer, however, was spurned, and the messengers were ill-treated. Then, last of all, God sent His Son — with John as His forerunner — saying, “They will reverence my Son” (*ref. previous parable [21:33-39]*). *BUT*, although God had stated that they would reverence His Son, *ALL things* which the Jewish people would do were known to Him from the beginning; and this, as foretold, *was NOT to occur*.

Jesus, near the conclusion of His earthly ministry, rode into Jerusalem astride “an ass,” presenting Himself as Israel’s King in fulfillment of the prophecy in Zech. 9:9 (Matt. 21:1-11). And He, in complete accord with the parable, was rejected, culminating in His crucifixion and death (*cf. Matt. 21:37-39; 22:1-6; 23:1-36*).

The rejection and impending crucifixion of God’s Son was the final blow. The kingdom was *THEN* taken from Israel and

subsequently extended to a separate and distinct nation (*cf.* Matt. 21:40-46; 22:8-10; I Peter 2:9, 10). And, though God used this new nation — *the one new man* “in Christ” — to re-offer the kingdom to Israel (seen in the Book of Acts), rejection on Israel’s part continued (with the re-offer of the kingdom being withdrawn about 62 A.D., at the time of Paul’s announcement in Acts 28:28).

Individuals comprising this new nation are synonymous with those from “the east and the west” in Matt. 8:11 and those out in “the highways” in Matt. 22:10. And *unbelief on Israel’s part*, followed by *others being brought in to be the recipients of that which naturally belonged to Israel*, leads up to the mention of “outer darkness” in both passages.

At this point though there is a difference in the two passages. Outer darkness in Matt. 8:12 is reserved for “the sons of the kingdom [a reference to Israel in this text],” but outer darkness in Matt. 22:13 is reserved for an individual appearing at the marriage festivities attendant the wedding of God’s Son. He appeared without the proper attire required for entrance into these festivities. He appeared without a wedding garment (*ref.* Chapter XIII in this book).

Israel had previously been mentioned in verses three through seven, with the man appearing without a wedding garment being identified with those called *after* the kingdom had been taken from Israel (*cf.* vv. 8-10, 14). This man would, thus, be among those from “the east and the west” in Matt. 8:11 or those found in “the highways” in Matt. 22:10.

To reconcile that which is taught in these two passages, bear in mind that at the time of Matt. 8:11, 12 the kingdom of the heavens *had NOT yet been taken from Israel*.

But Matt. 22:1-14 was given *at a time following the announcement concerning the removal of the heavenly portion of the kingdom from Israel*, with the anticipated offer of the kingdom being extended to another group (Matt. 21:33-43).

In both passages it is *the recipients of the offer* of the kingdom of the heavens who find themselves associated with the place called “outer darkness.”

In Matthew chapter eight, the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was open *to Israel ALONE*, even though the allusion was made to

others being brought into this kingdom. But at the time of the events in Matthew chapter twenty-two, the announcement had previously been made concerning this part of the kingdom being taken from Israel; and *NOW* the new recipient of the proffered kingdom was in view (though this new recipient — *the one new man* “in Christ” [I Peter 2:9-11] — was yet to be brought into existence [Matt. 16:18]).

Thus, “outer darkness” is used *the SAME way* in both passages. It is used *in association with those to whom the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was, at THAT time, being extended.*

3) Matthew 25:14-30

The third appearance of “outer darkness” in Matthew’s gospel is in a tripartite, connected discourse which deals with *the Jews, the Christians, and the Gentiles* — the Olivet Discourse.

The inception of Christianity *awaited a future date* at this time; but the discourse, given *following* Christ’s statement that He would build His Church and *following* the removal of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel, anticipated *the one new man* “in Christ” being brought into existence (Matt. 16:18, 19; 21:33-43; cf. Eph. 2:12-15).

To place the third appearance of outer darkness in Matthew’s gospel in its proper perspective, note a succinct review of the Olivet Discourse over the next several pages, with a particular emphasis on the Christian section of the discourse:

The first part of the discourse (24:4-39) deals exclusively with events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation and with the return of the nation’s Messiah at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, and the nation MUST NOW pass through the Tribulation and await her Messiah “in the way of thy judgments” (Isa. 26:8).

The second part of the discourse (24:40-25:30) deals with the new recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. The emphasis throughout this section is upon present faithfulness in view of a future time of reckoning, anticipating the kingdom.

The third part of the discourse (25:31-46) deals with judgment upon living, saved Gentiles following Christ’s return at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

These would be Gentiles saved mainly under the ministry of the 144,000 of Rev. 7, 14 (*cf.* Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 20:4-6), who proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom” to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation (*cf.* Matt. 24:13, 14; Rev. 12:5, 17).

In this fashion, the three sections of the Olivet Discourse reveal God’s dealings with the three segments of mankind — *Jew, Christian, and Gentile* — either during and/or at the conclusion of the present dispensation.

In the Jewish section of this discourse (24:4-39), God’s dealings with Israel are restricted to the time during and immediately following the coming Tribulation.

The reason for this is very simple: Israel has been set aside during the present time while God removes from the Gentiles “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14).

The TIME when God will deal with Israel once again awaits the completion of His purpose for the present dispensation.

This is *the reason WHY* the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse begins with Israel in the Tribulation. This section begins at the point where God resumes His dealings with Israel once again.

In the Christian section of this discourse (24:40-25:30), unlike the Jewish section, God *DOES* deal with a people during the present time — a time preceding the Tribulation. And those with whom God is presently dealing are the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens *following* Israel’s rejection of this offer, which is *EXACTLY* what is in view in this section of the Olivet Discourse.

In the Gentile section of this discourse (25:31-46), ONLY the Gentiles are in view. God, at that time in the future when these events occur, will have completed His dealings with Israel and the Church.

God will complete His dispensational dealings with Christians *FIRST* (*which includes judgment*); and this will be followed by God completing His dispensational dealings with Israel (*which includes judgment*).

THEN, God will deal with saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation, in judgment, immediately prior to His 1,000-year reign over the earth (which will be 1,000 years of judging — ruling the nations with “a rod of iron”).

With the whole of the Olivet Discourse succinctly summarized in the preceding manner, note where the third and last mention of outer darkness in Matthew's gospel is seen.

This third and last mention of "outer darkness" *lies at the end of the parable of the talents, which concludes the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.*

However, "outer darkness" is *NOT* restricted to the parable of the talents in this section. The parables about *one taken, another left* (24:40-44), *the Householder and His servant* (24:45-51), *the ten virgins* (25:1-13), and *the talents* (25:14-30) are interrelated after such a fashion that the expression "outer darkness" *MUST be looked upon as applicable in parallel passages in all four.*

Four parables follow the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the "days of Noah" (the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah have to do with *Israel and the nations DURING the Tribulation, NOT today*).

And the main thought throughout this entire section of Scripture (the parable of the fig tree, the days of Noah, and the four subsequent parables) centers around *the due season, watchfulness, and readiness* for the Lord's return, introduced in the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the days of Noah (the two passages which set the tone for the four parables which follow).

In the parable about one taken, another left, *watchfulness*, having to do with *faithfulness*, resulted in *the person being ready for the Lord's return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding positive action by the Lord when He did return.*

But *unwatchfulness*, having to do with *unfaithfulness*, resulted in *the person NOT being ready for the Lord's return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding negative action by the Lord when He did return.*

And though Christians *will NOT* see the days referred to by the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah, they can see signs on every hand, having to do with both, that the world is rapidly approaching that time referred to by the prophets and these verses in Matthew's gospel.

A remnant of Jews is back in the land (resulting from a Zionist movement), existing as a recognized nation among nations;

and sexual promiscuity, as portended by Noah's day, has become rampant in our day (though not an open participation of angels in the matter; such awaits the days of the coming Tribulation [both heterosexual and homosexual, for that which occurred during the days of Lot are to mark this time as well]).

Then in *the parable of the Householder and His servant*, the thought drawn from that which has preceded centers around *faithfulness* in dispensing "meat in due season." If the servant *remains faithful*, he will be made ruler over all the Lord's goods; but if the servant *becomes unfaithful*, he will be "cut asunder" and be appointed "his portion with the hypocrites."

(Note that by comparing Matt. 24:45-51 with the parallel section in Luke 12:42-46, it is clear that *ONLY one servant* is in view throughout.

The servant EITHER remains faithful OR he becomes unfaithful.)

The parable of the ten virgins immediately following begins with the word "Then," pointing back to the parable of the Householder and His servant. The parable of the ten virgins covers the same subject matter, providing additional information from a different perspective; and this parable concludes in a similar fashion by showing *that which awaits both those who are ready and those who are NOT ready at the time of the Lord's return.*

The parable of the talents, immediately following the parable of the ten virgins, is introduced in the Greek text by the words *Hosper gar* ("For just as"); and these two introductory words tell the reader that the parable about to follow is just like the parable which has preceded.

In a respect, these two words tell the reader that an explanatory parable for the parable of the ten virgins (and the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins as well) is about to be given.

Verse fourteen, introducing the parable of the talents, should literally read:

"For it [referring back to the parable of *the ten virgins*, and, consequently, the parables of *the Householder and His servant* and *one taken, another left*] is just as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods."

The parables, “one taken, another left,” “the Householder and His servant,” “the ten virgins,” and “the talents” *ALL center around the same basic issues. ALL present different facets of EXACTLY the same thing.*

(Note that “a parable,” by its own definition — from the meaning of the word itself [from the compound Greek word *parabole* (*para*, “alongside”; *bole*, “to cast”)] — is simply one truth placed alongside of a previous truth to help explain the previous truth [*i.e.*, a truth cast alongside (which would necessitate a previous truth)].

In the parable of the talents, a truth is placed alongside of a previous truth [in this case, the parable of the ten virgins, along with the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins (since all deal with the same basic issues)]. And the truth being placed alongside [the parable of the talents] is being given to help explain [provide additional light for] that which Christ had previously stated in the preceding three parables.)

In the parable about *one taken, another left*, the thought from the Greek text regarding the English translation, “one shall be taken, and the other left” (vv. 40, 41) should be understood in the sense of “one shall be received alongside [alongside the Lord], and the other turned away [turned away by the Lord].” The two verbs used in the Greek text are: *paralambano* and *aphiemi*.

Paralambano is a compound word, meaning “to take alongside, “to receive alongside” (*para*, “alongside”; *lambano*, “to take,” “to receive”); and *aphiemi* means “to send away,” “to turn away.”

The entire scene is judgmental, as evident from the succeeding three parables — all dealing with different facets of the same thing. In the parable, comparing it with the other parables, *faithfulness* resulted in a position alongside the Lord, but *unfaithfulness* resulted in the forfeiture of this position.

(The rapture is *seen ONLY indirectly* in this parable or in any one of the three succeeding parables. Thoughts in these parables have to do with events preceding the rapture and events following the rapture, *NOT* with the rapture itself per se.)

In the parable of the Householder and His servant, *faithfulness* would result in the servant being positioned as ruler over all the Lord’s goods, but *unfaithfulness* would result in the servant (the

same servant) being assigned a place with the hypocrites.

In the parable of the ten virgins, *the faithful servants* (wise virgins) were allowed to enter into the marriage festivities, but *the unfaithful servants* (foolish virgins) were excluded from these festivities.

And in the parable of the talents, *the faithful servants* were allowed to enter into “the joy” of their Lord, but *the unfaithful servant* was cast into the darkness outside (*i.e.*, cast into a place of darkness outside Christ’s “joy,” having to do with the things surrounding His reign over the earth, which would include the preceding marriage festivities [*cf.* Luke 19:16-19; Heb. 12:1, 2]).

Understanding the interrelationship between these parables and comparing them with the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two, it becomes clear that “outer darkness” is associated with all four.

This is the place where the unfaithful servants found themselves in all of the parables, even though the expression is used only in the parable of the talents. *ONE* parable describes the *place*, and *ALL four* describe *conditions* in this place — whether in a place outside the marriage festivities or outside Christ’s subsequent reign.

Comparing the parable of the Householder and His servant with the parable of the talents, note that positions of rulership are in view in both parables.

ONLY the faithful will be apportioned these positions. The unfaithful *will NOT ONLY* be denied positions in the kingdom *BUT* they will be apportioned their place “with the hypocrites,” where there will be “the weeping and the gnashing of teeth [an Eastern expression signifying deep grief]” (Matt. 24:51; 25:30, ASV); and this place is referred to as “the outer darkness” (ASV) in the latter parable.

(Note the same expression in Matt. 22:13 in connection with “the outer darkness” [*cf.* also Matt. 8:12]. Also note that the unfaithful among the ten virgins were excluded from the marriage festivities [25:10-12], as was the man without a wedding garment [who was bound and cast into “the outer darkness”] in Matt. 22:11-13.)

He Went Out...

“But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace...

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.'

But he denied before them all, saying, 'I know not what thou sayest' ...

And again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the man' ...

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, 'I know not the man.' And immediately the cock crew.

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, 'Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' And he went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:58, 69-75).

"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully...

If we suffer ['patiently endure'], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:5, 12).

Possibly the best illustration given in Scripture showing the downward path which it is possible for a Christian to take, ultimately leading into the place of darkness outside the light, is the recorded actions of the Apostle Peter immediately preceding Christ's crucifixion.

Christ had informed His disciples that *ALL* of them would "be offended" during the next few hours because of Him; and from that time until the time Peter is seen weeping bitterly because of his offense, there are *seven steps* recorded in Scripture showing how Peter was brought into the condition in which he found himself at this time (Matt. 26:31-75).

(The word "offended [Gk., *skandalizo*]" in Matt. 26:31 has to do with *something causing opposition, which can result in a fall*. This is the same word used in Matt. 13:21, which, according to Luke 8:13, can result in *a falling away, apostasy*.)

The words "fall away" in Luke 8:13 are the translation of *aphistemi* in the Greek text. This is the verb form of the noun *apostasia*, from which we derive our English word "apostasy."

Apostasia, a compound word, simply means, "to stand away from." The word *stasis* means "to stand"; and the preposition *apo*, prefixed to the word, means, "from." Thus, *apostasia* has to do with standing away from something else [*e.g.*, standing away from a previously held position, belief, etc.].

The disciples — and particularly Peter — in this respect, because of opposition, *apostatized*. That is, they stood away from the position which they had previously held with Christ, which is *EXACTLY* what Christ had alluded to in Matt. 26:31ff.)

Step One: Peter would *NOT* accept Christ's statement concerning that which the disciples were about to do, as he, on a previous occasion, *had NOT* accepted Christ's statement and had to be rebuked by the Lord (Matt. 16:21-23). Peter then made his boast that *he would NEVER* allow opposition to bring about a falling away (cf. James 4:13-15); and in response to Christ's subsequent statement that he would deny Him three times that very night, Peter responded, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"; and the other disciples responded likewise. *THEN*, during the next few hours, *NOT ONLY* would Peter *deny Christ* "three times," *BUT* "all the disciples" would *forsake Him and flee* (Matt. 26:33-35, 56).

Step Two: In this boast by Peter and the disciples — not allowing opposition to bring about a falling away — *a strong negative* is used in verse thirty-three and *a double negative* is used in verse thirty-five, reflecting back on the strong negative in verse thirty-three.

The use of a double negative (quite common in the Greek New Testament) is for emphasis, making the negative thought very emphatic.

Note an English translation of Matt. 26:33, 35 worded after a fashion to show this:

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, *yet will I NEVER be offended...*

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, *yet will I never, no not ever [reflecting back on, in a very emphatic manner, the strong negative in v. 33], deny thee.* Likewise said all the disciples."

Christ then took Peter, James, and John, separate from the other disciples, into a particular place in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Once in this place, He told them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." However, when Jesus went aside to pray, rather than watching, the disciples fell asleep. The Lord then had to rebuke them *for NOT watching*

and praying that they “enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26:36-41).

Step Three: Judas had betrayed Christ to the religious leaders of Israel; and he then led “a band of men and officers,” dispatched by the religious leaders, into the garden to take Christ. Seeing them, Peter drew his sword and resorted to the arm of flesh, to human means, to accomplish his previous boast.

Any battle in which the disciples found themselves engaged was to be *spiritual*, and it is *EXACTLY* the same for disciples today.

But Peter sought to force his will on others *through physical means* (the day when Christ will take the sceptre and “strike through kings” was future at that time, and it remains future today [Ps. 110:1ff; cf. Ps. 2:1ff]). In this respect, Peter’s actions were completely out of place, as similar actions by Christians would be today).

(Christians can exert *far more power* through prayer than through any fleshly means possible.

In fact, the chasm separating the two is as far as the East is from the West. One has to do with accessing Divine, infinite power; the other has to do with accessing humanistic, finite power.)

Peter, in his vain, fleshly effort, cut off an ear of one of the high priest’s servants. But Jesus, completely rejecting his actions, told him to put up the sword; and He then healed the servant, restoring his ear (Matt. 26:47-55; Luke 22:50, 51).

Step Four: Then the actions of Peter and the other disciples continued accordingly. The man of flesh had gained the ascendancy, and *the disciples were NOW doing EXACTLY what they had previously stated would NOT occur*. Though having previously boasted of that which they would do, the disciples were found sleeping when they should have been watching and praying; and Peter had resorted to the arm of flesh, as he sought to carry out his previous boast.

And this was followed by all the disciples, again, *doing EXACTLY what they had previously stated would NOT occur:*

“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56b; cf. v. 35).

Step Five: Peter then began to follow Christ “afar off.” He had taken the sword, and it was about to result in his ruin. He

had resorted to the arm of flesh and was in the process of reaping that which he had sown (cf. Matt. 26:52; Gal. 6:7, 8). Because of his previous actions, the closeness which had been his in Christ's inner circle, along with James and John, was *NOW gone* (cf. Matt. 17:1; 26:37, 58).

Step Six: When Jesus was taken into the high priest's palace for questioning by the religious leaders, Peter, following Him "afar off," remained outside in the courtyard. Rather than identifying himself with Christ on the inside, he sat down with the enemy on the outside (Matt. 26:69; Luke 22:54, 55).

Step Seven: Peter's past actions *had NOW* led him to the final point in his fall. When accused of being one of Christ's disciples, Peter denied his Lord on three separate occasions, followed by the cock crowing a second time just as Christ had foretold.

And the Lord, being led at that moment past Peter unto "the hall of judgment" (John 18:28), turned and *looked* upon Peter, awakening him to the stark reality of that which he had done (Matt. 26:34, 69-74; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:61).

The Lord's look in this passage was far more than a brief glance. The word used in the Greek text (*emblepo*) points to Christ fixing His eyes upon Peter in an intently searching manner. Peter came under *the Lord's scrutiny* for his actions, causing him to remember that which had previously occurred.

Peter then "went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62).

(The scene can *ONLY* be *judgmental* in nature, portraying that future day when Christ, with "eyes as a flame of fire," will judge those who are His, as they stand in His presence [cf. Rev. 1:14].)

Peter, because of his past actions, following Christ's intently searching look, found himself *outside, weeping bitterly*. And the whole of the matter surrounding Peter presents the whole of the matter surrounding unfaithful Christians and outer darkness.

Peter, because of his actions, following Christ's intently searching look, found himself in a place comparable to the place which Scripture describes as "the outer darkness," where there is "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (cf. Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30, ASV).

Gentile Section

Chapters 22-24

22

THE KING OF GLORY *Christ's Return, in All His Glory*

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left (Matt. 25:31-33).

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah (Ps. 24:10).

The third part of the Olivet Discourse concerns God's dealings with saved Gentiles at the conclusion of the Tribulation, preceding the Millennium. After Christ returns to the earth following the Tribulation, prior to the time He begins His 1,000-year reign over the earth, all of the Gentiles who were saved during the Tribulation and survived the judgments of the Tribulation (saved mainly as a result of the ministry of the 144,000 seen in Rev. 7, 14), will be gathered into His presence to be judged.

These Gentiles, appearing before Him, will first be separated into two groups — “the sheep” and “the goats.” They will be separated in this manner *solely on ONE basis*; and they will then be dealt with *solely on this ONE basis* — *their prior treatment of the Jewish people during the Tribulation.*

Order exists in *ALL* of God's future judgments, as seen throughout the Olivet Discourse or elsewhere in Scripture. *ALL* judgment of individuals will be on the basis of “works” and *MUST* occur in accordance with John 5:22 and I Peter 4:17.

God has committed “all judgment” *into the hands of His Son*, and “judgment *MUST* begin *at the house of God.*”

ALL of the saved will be judged by God's Son prior to any judgment of the unsaved. Actually, 1,000 years separate the judgment of the saved from that of the unsaved.

ALL of the saved will be judged preceding the Millennium, and ALL of the unsaved will be judged following the Millennium.

The Church will be judged at the close of the present dispensation, following Christ's return for His Own, preceding the Tribulation; and *ALL other saved individuals* will appear in different judgments at the close of the present dispensation, following Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation.

According to the Book of Daniel, there will be a seventy-five-day period between the end of the Tribulation and the time Christ begins His 1,000-year reign over the earth (Dan. 12:11, 12).

Certain things *MUST* be brought to pass following Christ's return but preceding His reign, which is the evident reason for this period. And one of the things which *MUST* be taken care of during this time will be *judgment upon ALL of the saved, with the kingdom in view.*

(There *can be NO such thing* as a judgment of unsaved individuals preceding the Millennium [such as Christ's judgment of Gentiles in Matt. 25:31-46 is often made to be by expositors].

The judgment of the saved *has to do with the Millennium; thus, they are judged BEFORE the Millennium.*

The judgment of the unsaved *has NOTHING to do with the Millennium, ONLY with the eternal ages following the Millennium; thus, their judgment occurs AFTER the Millennium, at the beginning of the eternal ages.)*

There are different groups of saved individuals who will appear before Christ to be judged following the Tribulation:

1) Resurrected Old Testament saints (which will include others besides Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob — those living during the twenty generations, the 2,000 years, extending from Adam to Abraham).

2) Jews who survive the Tribulation, look upon their Messiah, realize that this is the One Who paid the price for man's redemption at Calvary 2,000 years earlier, and be saved in the antitype of that which occurred when Christ appeared to

Paul as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6; I Tim. 1:15, 16; *cf.* Isa. 53:1ff; 66:8; Zech. 12:10-14; 13:6-9).

3) Gentiles who are saved during the Tribulation (many will be martyred but resurrected when Christ returns, and many others will survive this time and still be living when Christ returns).

The future judgment of Israel is referred to in Ezek. 20:33-38. This judgment will undoubtedly include both resurrected Old Testament saints and those Israelites living when Christ returns (experiencing salvation at that time).

Possibly other Old Testament saints (those preceding Abraham) will be resurrected with and judged at the same time and place as Israel (in keeping with I Peter 4:17).

The future judgment of the Tribulation martyrs is referred to in Rev. 20:4, and the judgment of the saved Gentiles who will be living at the time Christ returns is referred to in Matt. 25:31-46.

No specific order is given in Scripture concerning these judgments, though it seems evident that God will complete His dealings with Israel first, including their judgment.

In this respect, the judgment of Gentiles will apparently occur near the end of the seventy-five days of Dan. 12:11, 12, immediately preceding the beginning of the Messianic Era.

Judgment upon the saved *will be with a view to an inheritance in the kingdom*. Insofar as the Church, Israel, and the Gentiles saved during the Tribulation are concerned (both the martyrs and those who survive the judgments of the Tribulation), Scripture clearly reveals that their respective future judgments will involve *evaluations of the past actions of individuals to ascertain their EXACT positions in the kingdom* (*cf.* Ezek. 44:10-16; Matt. 16:27; 25:19-30, 34ff; Luke 19:15ff; Rev. 20:4).

But When...

Moving beyond the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse, one is introduced to a time-break at the opening point of the Gentile section. This section opens in the Greek text with the words

Hotan de, which should be translated, "But when."

De, a post-positive Greek particle, used quite often to show a contrast, is used in a disjunctive sense in this passage. *De*, used with *hotan*, forms a type connective which disjoins or separates that which has preceded from that which is about to follow. *Hotan de* thus places the coming of the Son of Man in His Glory (the subject matter introduced by *Hotan de*) over against the coming of the Son of Man to deal with His household servants.

These two words in the Greek text make it very clear that the coming of the Son of Man in His Glory occurs at an altogether different time than the coming of the Son of Man to deal with His household servants. His coming to deal with His household servants *will occur preceding the Tribulation, though extend into events following the Tribulation*; but His coming "in his glory" *will occur following the Tribulation*. The latter is clearly disjoined, separated, from the former in the text.

A popular, widely-promulgated interpretation of the Olivet Discourse views references concerning the coming of the Son of Man throughout the discourse as pertaining only to His coming following the Tribulation. Within the scope of this interpretation, the Church is not seen at all in the discourse. The entire matter from Matt. 24:4 through Matt. 25:30 is looked upon as God's end-time dealings with Israel.

The ten virgins, for example, are viewed as representing the nation of Israel awaiting her Messiah at the end of the Tribulation. *Hotan de* though separates the coming of the Son of Man in His Glory from the preceding parables after such a fashion that the four preceding, inseparably connected parables cannot possibly be looked upon as Jewish. Israel awaiting her Messiah at the end of the Tribulation will be awaiting the time He appears in His Glory, a time which is clearly separated by *Hotan de* from the parables immediately preceding this break in the discourse.

The separation produced by *Hotan de* is thus in perfect accord with the teaching of Scripture throughout that part of Matthew's gospel leading into the Olivet Discourse, governing interpretation in this discourse. Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens; and the kingdom *had NOT ONLY* been taken from Israel,

with a view to this kingdom being offered to “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof [the previously mentioned Church (Matt. 16:8; I Peter 2:9-11)],” *BUT* the house of Israel had been left “desolate” (Matt. 16:18; 21:43; 23:38).

With these things in mind, one can *unquestionably know* that when God once again begins to deal with individuals in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, as in the second part of the Olivet Discourse, *such dealings CANNOT be with Israel*. They *MUST*, on the other hand, be with the “nation” mentioned in Matt. 21:43, *the Church which was about to be called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected* (cf. Rom. 10:19; I Peter 2:9-11).

Aside from the preceding, the time element will likewise *NOT* permit the second part of this discourse to be looked upon as Jewish, for God’s household servants are placed in a position to bring forth fruit during the time of Christ’s absence, *which is during the time that the house of Israel lies desolate*.

The House of Israel during this time would be represented by *the fruitless fig tree* in both Matt. 21:19 and Matt. 24:32:

Matthew 21:19 (at Christ’s first coming [with leaves only], but lying completely withered throughout the present dispensation [not even possessing leaves; Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21]).

Matthew 24:32 (during the Tribulation, immediately preceding Christ’s second coming, when leaves reappear [portending fruit, during the Messianic Era; cf. Joel 1:7, 12; 2:22]).

Accordingly, the Gentile section of the Olivet Discourse *MUST* begin by showing a separation in time from that which preceded.

Anything else would be *completely out of harmony* with both Scripture leading into this discourse and Scripture up to this point in the discourse itself.

Coming in His Glory

The word “glory” has a peculiar reference in Scripture to the *government of the earth*, especially as it relates to the purpose for man’s creation in the beginning and his redemption following

the fall. And the reference to Christ's return "in his glory" and the fact that He will sit upon "the throne of his glory" following His return *MUST* be understood in the light of the way "glory" is used throughout Scripture.

1) *Man's Creation and Fall*

When Adam was created *to replace Satan as the ruler over this earth, he was created in the "image" and "likeness" of God* (Gen. 1:26-28).

According to Ps. 104:2, God is enswathed in "light"; He is covered "with light as with a garment." Comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is evident that man at the time of his creation, created in God's image and likeness, was also covered "with light as with a garment"; and this garment of light, elsewhere in Scripture, is specifically associated with God's "glory" (cf. Matt. 16:28-17:2; Luke 9:32; II Peter 1:16-18).

Man, at the time of his creation, was enswathed in *a covering of Glory*, which he lost at the time of the fall.

Losing this enswathement of Glory, man became a fallen image, resulting in certain conditions which had not heretofore existed. "The glory of God," with which man was clothed preceding the fall, is connected in Scripture with *the personal presence of God* (cf. Ex. 24:16-18; 25:8, 22; 40:34, 35).

Thus, the loss of this Glory *NOT ONLY resulted in a recognized nakedness BUT also a recognized separation.*

This is the evident reason for Adam and Eve's immediate action. Realizing that the Glory of God no longer covered their bodies, they sought to clothe themselves; and realizing that a separation now existed, they sought to hide from God (Gen. 3:7, 8).

Man since that time has remained in a fallen condition, leaving him estranged from the covering of Glory:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The words "come short" in this verse are from a Greek word (*hustereo*) which means "to fail to attain," "to be excluded from," or "to lack." Man, in his sinful state, has been *excluded from* "the glory of God" in the respect seen at the time of man's beginning in Eden.

(Note that when Christ came to earth the first time, He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” [Rom. 8:3]. That is, He laid aside the Glory which He had previously shared with the Father [John 17:5] and took upon Himself a body of flesh which, like fallen man’s body, *was NOT enswathed in a covering of Glory.*

This, in turn, was the central part of the ignominy and shame surrounding Calvary. Christ was stripped of His garments, and *He appeared on the Cross naked, wearing a crown of thorns, with His exposed flesh separated from the Glory, for all to behold* [Matt. 27:26ff].

But the same scenes which witnessed His ignominy and shame will one day witness His glory and exaltation, when He returns *NOT ONLY with a covering of Glory BUT possessing regal garments, wearing many diadems [regal crowns] upon His head* [Rev. 19:11ff].)

Following the fall, God covered Adam’s and Eve’s naked bodies, though not with the lost Glory. God instead covered their bodies with animal skins (Gen. 3:21). And for 2,000 years of human history, insofar as the Record is concerned, there is no mention of or allusion to God’s Glory. Man’s rule over the earth within a theocracy and in connection with God’s Glory, was put on hold.

2) *Beginning Anew with Abraham*

Two thousand years beyond Adam’s creation and subsequent fall, “the God of glory” appeared to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2; *cf.* Gen. 12:1-3).

The expression, “the God of glory,” appears only one other place in Scripture, and it is used in this place as a Messianic title (Ps. 29:3; *cf.* v. 10). “The God of glory” in Ps. 29:3 is “the King of glory” in Ps. 24:7-10, referring to the position which the Son of Man will hold in that future day when He shall “come in his glory” and “sit upon the throne of his glory.”

(Understanding the preceding will help one to grasp the correct usage in Scripture of the expressions, “the Lord of Glory” [I Cor. 2:7, 8], “the Father of glory” [Eph. 1:17], “the Spirit of glory” [I Peter 4:13, 14], and “the gospel of the glory of Christ” [II Cor. 4:3, 4; *cf.* I Tim. 1:11].

Note that each of these preceding references [shown following], contextually, appears in a Messianic setting.)

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 2:7, 8).

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge [‘Gk., *epignosis*, ‘mature knowledge’] of him” (Eph. 1:17).

“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 with exceeding joy” (I Peter 4:12, 13).

“But if our gospel be hid [‘covered,’ ‘veiled’], it is hid [‘covered,’ ‘veiled’] to them that are lost:

In whom the god of this world [‘age’] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the gospel of the Glory of Christ’], who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3, 4).

God’s appearance to Abraham as “the God of glory” was a clear indication that a 2,000-year silence relative to the Glory and the theocracy was at an end. God was about to take one man out of the human race and, through this one man, bring to pass His plans and purposes relative to the creation of man in the beginning.

The outworking of these plans and purposes, though still awaiting complete fulfillment 4,000 years after God’s appearance to Abraham, can be seen today in a fourfold fashion.

Through Abraham, God has brought forth:

- 1) *The nation of Israel.*
- 2) *His Word, through Israel*
- 3) *The promised Redeemer from Gen. 3:15, through Israel.*
- 4) *The Church, through Israel.*

The nation of Israel descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, Christ is the Seed of Abraham through the lineage

of David, and Christians are Abraham's seed through being "in Christ" (Acts 7:2; Gal. 3:16, 29). And through *Christ, Israel, and the Church*, the purpose for God's appearance to Abraham as the "God of glory" will ultimately be realized, placing man back in the position for which he was created.

God, through removing Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and placing him in another land, performing a special creation in Abraham's grandson (Jacob), and subsequently adopting the nation descending from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, could call a nation out of Egypt under Moses through which He would fulfill every restoration promise given since Adam's fall.

And this restoration had to do *first and foremost with the restoration of man in relation to a restored kingdom, which involved a restoration of the Glory.*

(In God's kingdom, *ONLY* "sons" can rule [all angels, because of their individual creation, are *sons of God* (which has to do with *regality*, not salvation — *e.g.*, Satan, because of creation, is a son of God)]; and in the human realm, *ONLY firstborn sons can rule.*

To fulfill His purposes concerning Abraham and His progeny in relation to regality, God performed a special creation, later followed by an adoption of the one whom He had created.

God performed a special creation in the person of Abraham's grandson, Jacob [Isa. 43:1]. This creation had to do with "Jacob," *the natural man, NOT "Israel," the spiritual man.*

Thus, the creation could be passed down from father to son, ultimately placing the entire nation descending from the loins of Jacob in the position of *God's son*. Then God later adopted *His son*, the nation of Israel. And adoption placed Israel in the position of *God's firstborn son* in a position wherein the nation could realize the reason for man's creation in the beginning [Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 4:22, 23; Rom. 9:4].

This was the nation God called out of Egypt under Moses — a nation ready to take the sceptre and realize the rights of primogeniture, the rights belonging to firstborn sons, within a theocracy, with a restored Glory.)

God had placed Israel in a position where the nation could rule within a theocracy, with a restored Glory. Four hundred and thirty years after God appeared to Abraham as the "God

of glory” in Ur of the Chaldees, this was brought to completion through God’s dealings with the descendants of Abraham in the wilderness of Sinai.

(Note *the reign of death* in the preceding respect, extending from Adam to Moses, as seen in Romans chapter five:

“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:

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed [charged to one’s account] when there is no law.

Nevertheless *death reigned from Adam to Moses*, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure [Gk., *tupos*, ‘type’] of him that was to come” (vv. 12-14).

“Death,” by the definition established in Genesis at the time of the fall — “...the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” [Gen. 2:17b] — is *separation from God*. When Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, both he and Eve lost their covering of Glory. A separation from God [death] then existed, and the reign of death seen in Rom. 5:14 began.

Then, 2,500 years later, during Moses’ day, there was a restoration of the Glory, though restored after a different fashion. And, with a restored Glory, the reign of death ended; man was no longer separated from God.)

Israel, God’s firstborn son, had been delivered from Egypt, the Law had been given to Moses, and the tabernacle had been constructed. All of this was climaxed by the “glory of the Lord” filling the tabernacle at Sinai. And for the first time in history a theocratic kingdom then existed on the earth (Ex. 4:22, 23; 12:41; 19:3-6; 25:8; 40:16-38).

The “glory” as it pertained to *the government of the earth* had been restored to man, *though NOT in the same manner as experienced by Adam prior to the fall*. Man in his sinful state remained estranged from the Glory in this respect, described by Paul in Rom. 3:23.

The Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai, though in possession of the Glory in one respect, were excluded in another.

Israel, as God's firstborn son within a theocracy, was to be removed from the wilderness of Sinai and placed in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Once in this land, the nation of Israel, with God in the nation's midst, was to rule over and be a blessing to *ALL the Gentile nations*.

However, because of disobedience through centuries of time, while God in His longsuffering patience waited, this position was realized only to a limited extent by the nation.

The kingdom reached its height during Solomon's reign (about 500 years after the establishment of the theocracy in the wilderness of Sinai), but conditions afterward deteriorated to the point that God eventually allowed pagan Gentile nations to come into the land of Canaan (God's land [Joel 3:2]) and take His people into captivity (*cf.* Lev. 26:1ff; Deut. 28:1ff).

The kingdom had been divided following Solomon's death (about 925 B.C.), forming both northern and southern kingdoms. Then, about two hundred years later, about 722 B.C., God allowed the Assyrians to come down and take those comprising the northern kingdom into captivity; and slightly more than one hundred years later, about 605 B.C., God allowed the Babylonians to come over and move against the southern kingdom after the same fashion (II Kings 17:4ff; II Chron. 36:6ff).

God then removed His Glory from Israel, *signaling an END to the Old Testament theocracy* (Ezek. 10:4, 18, 19; 11:23).

The removal of the Glory from Israel occurred almost 2,600 years ago, and to this day *NO* restoration has occurred. Israel, at Christ's first coming, was in the land with a rebuilt Temple housing no Glory. The nation's rejection of the King and the Kingdom at this time resulted in Israel being set aside while God removed from the Gentiles "a people for his name," delaying any restoration of the Glory to Israel for another 2,000 years (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:25).

The day is near at hand though, with Christ presently "even at the doors," when the Glory will be restored and a theocracy will once again exist on the earth. *NOT ONLY* will the Glory be restored to Israel (Ezek. 43:1-7; 44:4), *BUT* Christ will be present in all His Glory, and Christians will be present in the kingdom in bodies enswathed in glory.

Christians will have bodies like unto the body of Christ, described in Matt. 17:2 (*cf.* Luke 9:32; Phil. 3:21; II Peter 1:16-18; I John 3:2; Rev. 1:16). Christians will possess transfigured bodies enswathed in a covering of light, a covering of Glory.

In that day, Israel will be restored to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and rule at the head of the nations.

Christians, having been adopted as firstborn sons (Rom. 8:23; Heb. 12:23), will rule over the nations from the new Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth.

And Christ will have a dual reign, ruling from both David's throne in the earthly Jerusalem and from His Own throne in the heavenly Jerusalem.

In that day, God's three firstborn Sons (*Christ, Israel, and the Church*) — three Sons of Abraham, to whom God appeared as the "God of glory" — will rule the earth. And God's original purpose for man's creation, occurring 2,000 years prior to the days of Abraham, will then be realized.

With His Holy Angels

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.

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.

Possibly two of the most instructive 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.

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. 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 a similar reason [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].)

Understanding the working of these heavenly courts, the same thing can 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 they were the ones who had made the decisions and rendered the decree; and the Genesis account clearly shows that they 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 the perfect will of God — is looked upon as being done by the Lord Himself.

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). Angelic activity in the heavenly courts, as it pertains to those upon the earth, will evidently be carried out in a climactic sense and on an intensified basis during the Tribulation.

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.

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.

(Note that *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].

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:

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ['in the heavens']: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven ['in the heavens']."

This statement to Peter [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 does exist, and it 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].

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, possibly also Matt. 18:18 [or a past Jewish assembly]. And when those in the Church act *in complete accord* with that being dealt with in these verses, their actions — exactly as the actions of angels acting under fixed 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 on earth are seen *as having already been acted upon in the heavens before those in the Church even act* ["bind" and "loose" are simply two words used to express these actions, both on earth and in the heavens].

Now, what is this all about? Can Christians in a Church just come to a conclusion on which they all agree and have that conclusion already been decided in the heavens? That's *NOT* exactly 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 today, in order to have their actions seen as having already been performed in the heavens, must do the same. *They 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 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 above all things Your Word and Your Name' (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* [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 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].

23

THOSE ON HIS RIGHT HAND

Approved for an Inheritance in the Kingdom

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:34-40).

When Christ returns to the earth it will be as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Christ, at His first appearance, at the time of His incarnation, was born “king of the Jews” (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:2); and He will return to exercise that position at His second appearance (Rev. 19:11-16).

Completely unlike His first appearance — “in the likeness of sinful flesh [without the covering of Glory which man had lost in Eden 4,000 years earlier]” (Gen. 3:7; Rom. 8:3) — Christ will reappear with *a body enswathed in Glory, clothed in regal garments, with many diadems on His head* (the type crown showing regality).

He will reappear as *the rightful King*, ready to “judge and make war,” *not as One to be ridiculed and arrayed as a mock King by existing powers* (cf. Ps. 2:1-12; 24:1-10; 110:1-7; Matt. 27:27-31; Luke 24:26; John 1:36; Rev. 5:5-7; 19:11-16).

Christ will *NOT ONLY* reappear as “King” *BUT* He will have in His possession *the kingdom which He had gone away to receive*.

Christ’s reappearance after this fashion will mark the beginning of climactic events pertaining to God’s plans and purposes, which date back in time to the period prior to man’s existence upon earth.

In Scripture, the enacting of God’s plans and purposes as they pertain to man are looked upon as occurring at two different times preceding man’s creation: “*BEFORE* the foundation of the world” (John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; I Peter 1:20). and “*FROM* the foundation of the world” (cf. Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

“Foundation” is the translation of the Greek word, *katabole*, a compound word which literally means “to cast down” or “to throw down” (*kata* means “down,” and *bole* means “to cast” or “to throw”).

The manner in which this word is used in a general sense in the expression, “foundation of the world,” could describe God’s past act of casting/throwing down the world (*i.e.*, creating the world).

However, *katabole* appears to be used in a more specific sense in Scripture, referring to God’s subsequent act of restoring the ruined creation in Gen. 1:2b ff rather than His initial act of creating the earth in Gen. 1:1. In this respect, matters mentioned in the verses where this expression is used would refer to God’s actions regarding His Son and man at two different times in history, following the creation of the heavens and the earth:

1) “Before [Gk., *pro*] the foundation of the world” (before the restoration of the ruined creation, in eternity past, which could be any time between the creation [Gen. 1:1] and the restoration of the ruined creation [Gen. 1:2b ff]).

2) “From [Gk., *apo*] the foundation of the world” (the time of the restoration of the ruined creation [Gen. 1:2b ff], when God began counting 7,000 years of time in relation to His Son and man as it pertained to regality and this earth).

Thus, God's plans and purposes as they pertain to His Son and man had their beginning in eternity past. The kingdom prepared for saved Gentiles "from the foundation of the world" in Matt. 25:34 had been planned in the eternal council chambers of God at a time "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4-10). Prior to God's restorative work delineated in Gen. 1:2b ff, in eternity past, the ages were planned around the preordained activity of the Son; and the Messianic Era is the climactic age in a series of ages.

(At least *three ages* would be in view — one pre-Adamic and two post-Adamic.

At least *one age* [possible more] would have preceded man's creation. During this time, Satan was placed as ruler over a newly created earth, his fall occurred, and the subsequent ruin of his kingdom followed [Gen. 1:1, 2a; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:14, 15].

Then *one age* covers Man's 6,000-year Day, beginning with the restoration of the ruined earth for man and man's subsequent creation on the sixth day [the one brought forth to replace the incumbent ruler, Satan].

Man's fall though delayed, for 6,000 years, the purpose for man's creation being realized, during which time God is performing a redemptive work relative to man [in order that man might one day realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning].

Then, the last age in this succession of ages is the 1,000-year Messianic Era, during which time God's plans and purposes for His Son and for man will be brought to fruition, which is *the goal seen realized at the termination of all three sections of the Olivet Discourse*.

For additional information on "ages," particularly as distinguished from "dispensations," refer to Appendix III in this book.)

God's preordained activity as it pertains to the ages relating to man, along with the earth, is referred to in Eph. 3:11 and Heb. 1:2, and the respective contexts of these two verses leave no room to question that which is in view. Both point to the same thing — a succession of ages, terminating with an age in which the "restitution ['restoration'] of all things" will occur (Acts 3:21; cf. Acts 1:6).

Eph. 3:11 should literally read:

"According to a plan of the ages which He formed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And Heb. 1:2 should literally read:

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us in the person of His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the ages [formed the ages after a pattern in accord with the pre-planned activity of the Son within these ages]” (*cf.* John 1:3; Col. 1:16-18).

Verses leading into Eph. 3:11 have to do with the mystery revealed to Paul and the purpose for the present dispensation; and verses following Heb. 1:2 have to do with God bringing His Son into the inhabited world once again, but this time to exercise the rights of primogeniture as His firstborn Son.

The whole of Scripture moves toward a climactic age in which a new order of Sons will rule the earth for the express purpose of bringing ALL things under subjection to Christ, anticipating the eternal ages beyond (Rom. 8:19; I Cor. 15:24-28).

This plan was conceived and enacted “*before the foundation of the world,*” and the kingdom — the central focus of the plan — was prepared “*from the foundation of the world.*”

Order and Basis of Judgment

The Gentile section of the Olivet Discourse is normally looked upon by premillennial students of the Word as pertaining to a *general judgment of ALL the Gentiles surviving the Tribulation — both saved and unsaved, living at the time Christ returns — with the works of those being judged revealing their saved or unsaved status.*

A judgment of this nature though is *NOT* what is taught either in this text or anywhere else in Scripture. Such a judgment would be *completely out of line with the teaching of Scripture NOT ONLY on salvation itself BUT on the timing and basis of ALL future judgments pertaining to man.*

Salvation is by “*grace through faith,*” and man’s works can have *NO part* in the matter. Salvation is based *ENTIRELY* on the *finished work of Christ*, and man *MUST* be completely passive. *Man CANNOT perform works to be saved, to stay saved, or to show that he has been saved. IF* he could do any one of these three, then works would have entered into an area where works *CANNOT* exist, and salvation would cease to be by grace through faith (Rom. 11:6).

Insofar as judgment is concerned, neither can “a general judgment” exist within the framework of that which Scripture reveals. “The saved” *MUST always be judged first* (I Peter 4:17), requiring a separation of the saved from the unsaved preceding judgment. A general judgment — both the saved and the unsaved called before Christ at the same time to be judged — would violate this principle.

Then again, future judgments in Scripture *can have NOTHING whatsoever to do with eternal salvation or eternal damnation*. One’s eternal destiny *will ALWAYS* be a settled, closed matter before the person stands in the presence of Christ to be judged at a future date, with judgment relative to one’s acceptance or rejection of Christ having already occurred.

John 3:18 makes this very clear:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned [‘judged’] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The issue surrounding one’s eternal destiny *can NEVER be raised at any future judgment*, for judgment relative to this matter will have already occurred *in past time*. God judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary, and this judgment affects both the believer and the unbeliever in *the same passive sense*.

It is NOT possible for a believer to ever be brought into judgment where issues surrounding his eternal destiny come into view. Sin has already been judged vicariously in God’s Son, and *God is satisfied*. The believer possesses the imputed righteousness of Christ (Rom. 5:15-18; II Cor. 5:21), and the penalty for sin has already been paid on his behalf (Rom. 6:23).

NOR can the unbeliever, as well, ever appear in a future judgment where issues involve his eternal destiny. Though he is completely outside the efficacy of Christ’s vicarious act, judgment relative to the matter at hand (judgment upon sin at Calvary) *has already occurred*. This is why John 3:18 clearly places the judgment of the unbeliever in past time. *EVERYTHING is based on Christ’s past, completed work and God’s judgment of sin within the scope of this completed work*.

An unbeliever is looked upon within the framework of the entire matter in *the same passive sense* that the believer is viewed.

A vicarious judgment for sin occurred in past time; and even though the unbeliever is outside the scope of this vicarious act, he is looked upon as having already been judged since the judgment for sin has already occurred.

To bring any individual — saved or unsaved — into judgment at a future date where *even one issue* involves matters surrounding his eternal destiny would be to judge once again that which God has already judged. Thus, every future judgment — pertaining to the saved and the unsaved alike — *can ONLY involve issues completely separate from one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation.*

Inheriting the Kingdom

The key word to acquire a proper understanding of the judgment of living Gentiles when Christ returns is the word “inherit.” Those Gentiles placed at Christ’s right hand (the hand of “power,” symbolic of *strength* and *force* [Gen. 48:17-19]) and dealt with first are said to *inherit a kingdom* prepared for them “from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

The issue at hand in Christ’s judgment of saved Gentiles (*all*, both those placed at His right hand and those placed at His left hand) at the end of the Tribulation *is clearly inheritance, NOT eternal life.*

Gentiles placed at both His right hand and His left hand will be judged on the basis of “works” relative to realizing or being rejected for an inheritance in the kingdom. And the reason they can be judged in this manner is because they will have already been judged on the basis of the work of Another — on the basis of Christ’s finished work at Calvary.

1) Inheritance and Family Relationship

In the Scriptural framework, inheritance *is ALWAYS a family matter.* In the Old Testament, “sons” were first in line to receive the inheritance, with daughters next. If there were no sons or daughters in the immediate family, the inheritance passed to the nearest family member or members designated by the law of inheritance (Num. 27:8-11).

In the New Testament, insofar as Christ, Israel, and the Church

are concerned, it is “Sons” ALONE which are in view, more specifically *firstborn Sons*. It is God’s firstborn Sons Who will come into possession of the inheritance and exercise the rights of primogeniture.

And these rights will begin to be exercised in the Messianic Era through God’s firstborn Sons ruling over the Gentile nations.

Firstborn Sons hold their positions either through *relationship* (Jesus and His relationship to the Father — God’s only begotten firstborn Son) or *adoption* (Israel and the Church [Israel was adopted in time past, and the Church is yet to be adopted]); and firstborn Sons hold (or, as in the case of the Church, will hold) their respective positions *in view of one day exercising power and authority following their coming into possession of the awaiting inheritance.*

Inheritance within the kingdom to be realized by saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation though has *NOTHING* to do with exercising the rights of the firstborn. *NOTHING* is said in Scripture about God adopting Gentile nations, as He adopted Israel (or as He will adopt the Church). National adoption among the nations of the earth belongs to *Israel ALONE* (Rom. 9:4).

Thus, inheritance as it pertains to firstborn Sons and inheritance as it pertains to the saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation would have to be looked upon in different respects.

Exactly what position saved Gentiles will occupy in the kingdom is unrevealed. They are said to inherit the kingdom and reign with Christ (*cf. Matt. 25:34; Rev. 20:4*), *though evidently NOT as firstborn sons.*

The nations of the earth coming out of the Tribulation and populating the millennial earth will be ruled by, reached with God’s message, and blessed through Israel. And Gentiles inheriting the kingdom at the beginning may very well have a part, under Israel, ruling and reaching the nations with God’s message.

Then again, the Gentiles inheriting the kingdom could occupy a similar regal place on earth under Christ and His co-heirs as they rule the nations from the heavens.

The matter though is unrevealed. And the preceding has been set forth only as possibility for thought, nothing more.

2) *Inheritance and Salvation*

Contrary to what is often taught, the word “inheritance”

NEVER appears in Scripture as a synonym for the salvation which we presently possess. *Eternal life* is one thing, and *inheritance* is something entirely different; and confusion abounds when proper distinctions are not made.

The offer of “eternal life” is reserved for *those outside the family*; and the offer of “an inheritance” is reserved for *those within the family* (“...if children, then heirs...” [Rom. 8:17]). One is a *free gift*, but the other requires *merit*. One is *nonforfeitable*, for it is based on the finished work of Christ; but the other *can be forfeited*, for it is based on actions of the individual family members.

Consequently, inheritance in Scripture is connected with eternal life *ONLY to the extent* that one has to *FIRST* be in possession of eternal life *BEFORE* he can be in line to receive the inheritance.

There is though a salvation which is inherited (note that the word “salvation” is used in a much broader sense in Scripture than just a reference to eternal life [as is the word “gospel,” as well]).

For *Christians*, salvation in connection with inheritance has to do with exercising the rights of the firstborn during the coming age. It has to do with *the saving of the soul, the saving of the life* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27; Heb. 1:14-2:5; 10:35-39; I Peter 1:9-11). Coming into possession of this salvation will be synonymous with coming into possession of *an inheritance in the kingdom as Sovereigns*.

An inheritance for *saved Gentiles* coming out of the Tribulation though, as previously noted, will be a different matter. There is *NOTHING* in Scripture which would connect their inheritance with sonship and positions of sovereignty of a nature sonship would portend; *NOR* is their inheritance referred to in Scripture in the sense of a salvation or deliverance, as is the Christians’ inheritance.

Saved Gentiles living at the time Christ returns, who enter into an inheritance in the kingdom, will have endured unto the end of the Tribulation and be “saved [physically delivered]” out of that period (Matt. 24:13, 14). They will then realize an inheritance of some unrevealed type in the kingdom.

3) *Inheritance and Merit*

Matt. 25:34-40 clearly attests to the fact that inheritance is based on the righteous acts of individuals in the family (works of

the redeemed) rather than the righteous act of the Head of the family (the finished work of Christ on Calvary, allowing redeemed individuals to occupy a place in the family).

And this same teaching regarding “inheritance” is covered elsewhere in Scripture through showing the possibility that one’s inheritance can be forfeited by improper conduct, seen in the parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse through a failure of household servants to properly carry out the responsibility entrusted to them by the Householder during His time of absence.

As in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse, both positive and negative aspects of the matter are dealt with in the Gentile section of the Discourse. The positive side is seen through Christ’s dealings with those on His right hand, and the negative side is seen through His dealings with those on His left hand.

But, again, detail of the nature seen in Christ’s prior dealings with Christians is not seen in His dealings with the Gentiles in Matt. 25:31-46. One can rest assured though that within God’s perfect justice and righteousness there will always be a just recompense in His Son’s judgmental dealings with mankind — within both positive and negative aspects of these dealings — for Christians on the one hand and saved Gentiles on the other.

Scripture abounds with information concerning Christ’s dealings with Christians in that coming day, particularly with warnings concerning that which awaits household servants who fail in their responsibility to properly handle that which the Householder entrusted to them during His time of absence.

Failure in this realm will result in a forfeiture of the rights belonging to firstborn sons. Such Christians will have forfeited their birthrights and thus the inheritance belonging to the firstborn.

In this respect, Scripture provides two classic examples of individuals who forfeited the rights belonging to the firstborn and consequently forfeited their inheritances. One can be seen in the actions of Esau, and the other in the actions of Reuben.

And these things occurred “for ensamples [‘types’]”; and they have been recorded “for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [‘ages’] are come” (I Cor. 10:6, 11).

These events occurred within God’s sovereign control of all

things in order that He might have these accounts to draw upon to teach Christians deep things within the mystery revealed to Paul concerning the inheritance awaiting firstborn sons.

Esau, Isaac's firstborn, forfeited his birthright to satisfy a fleshly gratification. He sold his birthright for a single meal (Gen. 25:27-34).

When it came time for the father to bestow his blessing on the firstborn, Jacob was the one who received the blessing, *NOT Esau*. Esau had forfeited these rights; and once forfeited, *they were irretrievable*.

After Isaac had blessed Jacob as firstborn, Esau tried to get his father to change his mind and bless him as well. But his efforts were *to NO avail*. The father's blessing had already been bestowed upon Jacob, and the forfeited rights of the firstborn *were gone forever* (Gen. 27:26ff; Heb. 12:14-17).

Then, a forfeiture of these same rights is seen in events surrounding Jacob's firstborn son. Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, was in direct line to inherit the rights of primogeniture; but because of one grave sin committed during his life, Reuben forfeited these rights. Reuben's sin, resulting in the forfeiture of his birthright, was sexual impropriety of a nature which dishonored and shamed his father:

"...Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard it" (Gen. 35:22b).

As a consequence, Reuben's birthright was divided among three of his brothers.

The *tribal rulership* was bestowed upon "Judah," *the priestly office* was bestowed upon "Levi," and *the double portion* of the father's estate was given to "Joseph."

The tribe of "Judah" became heir to *the kingly line*, the tribe of "Levi" became heir to the *priestly line*, and the tribe of "Joseph" inherited *the double portion*, realized through Joseph's two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh), *who each received a full inheritance* (I Chron. 5:1, 2).

The preceding reveals the proper Scriptural distinctions between being a member of the family on the one hand and being in line to receive an inheritance on the other.

Though Esau and Reuben forfeited their inheritances, they remained sons within the family.

And it is *the SAME for a Christian*. Becoming a member of the family, being born from above, places one in a position to inherit.

The Christian as *a child* of God is an “heir”; and the Christian as *a son* is awaiting the “adoption” in order to realize the inheritance (Rom. 8:14-23).

Christians have been saved for the purpose of one day exercising the rights of the firstborn, seated on the throne with Christ. However, as in the cases of Esau and Reuben (historical accounts forming types, set forth as warnings for Christians), these rights can be forfeited; but also, as in the cases of Esau and Reuben, such a forfeiture can produce *NO change* in one’s family relationship.

Understanding these distinctions will allow one to see *EXACTLY* what is in view when Christ calls attention to entering into an inheritance because of merit at the time He judges saved Gentiles following His return.

Note that Christ will say to these Gentiles:

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (v. 34).

And this will be said because of *works* performed following their salvation (vv. 34-36). They will have *merited* this right because of their previous positive treatment of Christ’s brethren (v. 40).

Thus, the works of these saved Gentiles are clearly associated with *an inheritance in the kingdom*, *NOT with eternal life* (an impossibility). To teach, as many do, that Gentiles appearing before Christ in Matt. 25:31ff will show by either their works or their lack of works a saved or unsaved status *NOT ONLY* does violence to Biblical teachings concerning salvation by grace *BUT* it completely obscures that being taught in Matt. 25:31-46.

Good works or a lack of such works *can NEVER* have anything to do with showing one’s saved or unsaved status. Man’s works, after any fashion, either before or after a person is saved, *can NEVER* enter into the realm of One’s eternal salvation.

The finished work of Christ ALONE is seen in this realm.

Christians appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ will be judged on the basis of works in relation to an inheritance in the kingdom; and saved Gentiles appearing before Christ following His return will be judged *after this same fashion in relation to the same thing*. The issue of one's eternal destiny *can occupy NO place* in either one of these judgments or in any other future judgment.

Christ's Brethren

Gentiles being judged at the time of Christ's return will be individuals from the nations of the earth saved during the immediately preceding Tribulation. They will have been saved mainly as a result of the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists called forth by God to proclaim the "gospel of the kingdom" to the nations of the earth during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. These Gentiles will also be those who escaped the wrath of Antichrist as he sought their destruction, along with the destruction of Israel.

Satan's final, climactic effort to thwart God's plans and purposes, established in eternity past, "before the foundation of the world," will be carried out through Antichrist. Satan, following his being cast out of the heavenly realm from which he presently reigns, will give unto a man (the Antichrist, the Beast — evidently, his actual his son [Gen. 3:15]) "his power, and his seat ['throne'], and great authority." He will give unto Antichrist that which he previously offered to Christ (*cf.* Luke 4:5, 6; Rev. 13:2).

And through this man, seated upon his throne, Satan will do everything within his power to prevent a future manifestation of the kingdom of Christ.

In this respect, he will turn his attention toward both *the Sovereigns* (God's firstborn Sons, with his wrath vented particularly against Israel during the Tribulation) and *those having anything to do with any of the Sovereigns* (saved Gentiles befriending Israel during those days, destined to realize an inheritance in the kingdom as well), *for man inheriting the kingdom will mean an END to Satan's rule*.

The Book of Revelation, from chapter six through the opening verses in chapter nineteen, relates events which will occur on earth during and immediately following the seven-year Tribulation. This

portion of Scripture, though relating some events which will occur during the first three and one-half years of this period, is given over almost entirely to events beginning in the middle of the Tribulation and extending throughout the last three and one-half years, followed by the return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. Consequently, this is the section of Scripture to which one must go in order to properly understand certain things about Christ's judgment of the Gentiles on the basis of their activity during the Tribulation.

The most instructive portions of Scripture in this respect are Revelation chapters seven, twelve, and fourteen. These chapters deal with the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world during the Tribulation, with the innumerable multitude of Gentiles who will be saved as a result of their ministry, and with Satan's efforts to prevent or hinder everything associated with their ministry.

(*Ref.* Chapters II, III in this book, where events in Rev. 7, 12, 14 are discussed. Also, see a fuller discussion in the author's book, *The Time of the End*, Chapters XXI, XXVI.)

Satan and his angels, immediately following their being cast out of the heavens onto the earth near the middle of the Tribulation, will direct their attention toward Israel. The reason given in Scripture is because Israel, at that time, will be about to bring forth the 144,000 evangels (a first-fruit of the nation [Rev. 14:4]), who will carry the message of salvation and the coming kingdom to the Gentiles throughout the earth during the last half of the Tribulation; and Satan will seek to destroy the 144,000 as soon as they appear, seeking to prevent the proclamation of this message (Rev. 12:4).

His efforts though will be in vain. The 144,000, after they are brought forth, will be supernaturally removed from the earth to escape Satan's wrath (this is the reason they are seen in heaven in Rev. 14:1-5) and shortly thereafter will (they could *ONLY* be) be sent back to the earth to deliver their message during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation (Rev. 12:5, 17).

Satan, following the removal of the 144,000 into heaven, will then, through the man of sin, vent his wrath upon the nation of Israel. And things will transpire so rapidly at this time that the Jews

are told to flee with *ONLY* the clothes which they will have on their backs.

The Jewish people in the land are told to flee into “the mountains” (Matt. 24:15, 16 [*world kingdoms, i.e., the nations; cf. Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35; Luke 21:20-24*]), “the wilderness” (Rev. 12:6, 14-16 [*Gentile lands, as distinguished from the land of Israel; cf. Ex. 19:1; Heb. 3:8, 17*]).

These individuals, comprising only part of world Jewry (some 6,000,000, about two-fifths) will either *flee into the surrounding Gentile nations*, “fall by the edge of the sword [be slain],” or be “led away captive into all nations” (*cf. Matt. 24:16; Luke 20-24; Rev. 12:6, 14*).

The majority of Jews reside outside the land today, and the majority will probably still be outside the land when Antichrist appears. And they will evidently remain scattered throughout the world during all of the Tribulation, with those presently in the land either being slain or joining them out among the nations for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

Anti-Semitism, particularly during the last half of the Tribulation, will become rampant worldwide. Jews will come under the sentence of death, and conditions will deteriorate far beyond those seen in Europe during the years 1939-1945. Many Jews though, as in Europe during the World War II years, will survive this time. These are the ones who will be regathered “from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” by angels at the time Christ returns. And the shortening of the days of the Tribulation will occur first and foremost for these particular Jews (Matt. 24:22, 31).

And the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will proclaim their message to Gentiles throughout the world where Jews presently reside and where Jews in the land of Israel will be driven when Antichrist enters with his armies in the middle of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).

“Christ’s brethren” in Matt. 25:40, 45 are *the Jewish people* (Gen. 37:14, 16, 17; 45:1-4); and can only refer to all Jews scattered out among the Gentiles, in Gentile lands (again, where many Jews are today and where all of the Jews will be found during the last half of the Tribulation).

The situation for Jews scattered throughout the earth in that day can *ONLY* be viewed as *grave beyond description*. They will be

hunted, killed, and sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world (Isa. 14:2; Joel 3:7; Matt. 24:9); and numerous saved Gentiles worldwide will befriend these Jews, along with befriending the 144,000 Jewish evangelists proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

The mark of the Beast will be given during this period, and no one will be able to “buy or sell” apart from having received this mark. But those receiving the mark will find themselves under a far greater condemnation (Rev. 13:15-17; 14:9-12).

Two-thirds of the Jews throughout the earth will die during this time, along with an innumerable host of saved Gentiles (Zech. 13:8; Rev. 7:9-17). Saved Gentiles befriending both saved and unsaved Jews being hunted and killed will undoubtedly find themselves in similar straits as well (*e.g.*, note that which awaited those aiding Jews during WWII in Europe). This will be a time when matters surrounding saved people befriending Christ’s brethren will be quite different than they are today.

(According to present figures regarding the world’s Jewish population, some 9,000,000 Jews will be slain in about half the time that the Third Reich took to slay 6,000,000 during the years 1939-1945 [they will be slain, worldwide, mainly during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation, extending into days following Christ’s return; but note a shortening of these days for the sake of the Jewish people (Matt. 24:22)].

The Third Reich had trouble disposing of 6,000,000 Jewish bodies over the space of about seven years, building giant crematoriums and burying others together in common, mass graves. Far more horrific conditions can only exist in this one realm alone during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.)

We’re really not given details concerning how Gentiles under the sentence of death who cannot purchase food or trade after any other fashion in the commercial world will be in a position to befriend Jewish people in similar straits. The prevalence of anti-Semitism during this period — placing Jews in an altogether different position than Gentiles — would possibly provide one explanation (*ref.* “Anti-Semitism,” in Appendix I of this book).

For a segment of Jewry, the type ministry which the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will have would possibly provide other thoughts

surrounding the problems Gentiles will have befriending Jews in that day. These Jewish evangels will be in the public eye and have to travel about; and in the course of their travels they will have to acquire food and lodging, at times in unfamiliar surroundings.

They will be carrying on a ministry during extremely difficult times — times unlike anything ever seen in man's 6,000-year history; and God will use saved Gentiles (saved as a result of the ministry of the Jewish evangels), occupying a different position relative to the public, to befriend, minister to, these Jews in order to insure the worldwide proclamation of their message.

One though does not need to understand all the details of the preceding matter. It falls our lot only to believe that which God has revealed. The facts as given clearly state that saved Gentiles will befriend, minister to, Jews during the Tribulation; other saved Gentiles though will not do so. And at the time of Christ's return, *ALL of these Gentiles will be judged on the basis of their prior treatment of the Jewish people, with a view to an inheritance in the kingdom.*

Gen. 12:3 states:

"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee..."

And this statement concerning Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob, which God gave Abraham 4,000 years ago and, through His Spirit, moved Moses to record 3,500 years ago, sets forth *the fundamental principle in Scripture which will govern the judgment of saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation.*

They will be blessed because *they had been a blessing to the Jewish people.* And, further, it will be revealed to them that the treatment which they extended to "Christ's brethren" was actually *treatment extended to Christ Himself.*

Why? Note Ex. 3:1, 2; Isa. 63:9; Dan. 3:23-27.

Accordingly, Christ will say to saved Gentiles in that day:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (*cf.* Isa. 63:9).

This is a statement resting on *an unchangeable principle which is no less true today than it will be in that coming day.*

24

THOSE ON HIS LEFT HAND

Rejected for an Inheritance in the Kingdom

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:41-46).

Contrary to common, widespread interpretative views on Matt. 25:31-46, the only time Christ will deal with unsaved Gentiles when He returns to the earth — preceding His actual 1,000-year reign over the earth, with His co-heirs — will be when He treads the winepress at what is commonly called the battle of Armageddon.

Christ’s judgment of Gentiles, as seen at the end of the Olivet Discourse, when He returns and sits on the throne of His Glory, will be *with saved Gentiles ALONE, NOT with both saved and unsaved Gentiles.*

And this judgment, as any other judgment at this time, will be with *the kingdom in view.* This judgment, as any of the other judgments, will have to do with *either realizing an inheritance in the kingdom or being rejected for an inheritance in the kingdom.*

And the basis of this judgment will be the previous actions of those being judged, whether they ministered or didn't minister to Christ's brethren, the Jewish people, during the Tribulation.

Those having ministered to the Jewish people during the previous Tribulation will realize an inheritance in the kingdom; those who didn't minister to the Jewish people during the previous Tribulation though will be turned away, rejected for an inheritance.

In this respect, the matter will be very similar to that seen in Christ's previous dealings with Christians at His judgment seat, as seen in the four parables covering the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse.

In the first of these four parables, one is received alongside, and another is turned away. And receiving alongside or being turned away is seen, in a subsequent parable, to be with a view to *the kingdom which the Nobleman had gone away to receive*.

The same thing is seen in the judgment of saved Gentiles.

The ones on His right hand will be received in the same manner as seen in the previous parable (actually, all four previous parables, all covering different facets of the same thing) — received alongside; and the ones on His left hand will be turned away, as also seen in this parable (again, in all four parables).

Being received or being turned away in this manner has to do with the same thing previously seen in these parables. It has to do with *an inheritance in the kingdom, which WILL BE realized by some and NOT realized by others*.

The Kingdom in View

EVERYTHING surrounding Christ's return is seen having to do with the KINGDOM which He had gone away to receive.

When Christ returns, between the time His feet touch the Mount of Olives and the time He and His co-heirs ascend the throne and reign (Zech. 14:4, 9), numerous things, of necessity, will have to occur.

At the time Christ returns, Satan will still be in power, with Antichrist seated on His throne; an unconverted Israel, which Satan will still be seeking to destroy, will still be scattered among

the nations; and the Gentiles, saved mainly as a result of the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, who survived the Tribulation, will still be scattered throughout the nations of the earth as well.

Christ will deal with Israel first, relative to conversion, repentance, and restoration to the land, as well as calling the nation before Him in Judgment.

And EVERYTHING will be with a view to the KINGDOM.

Then the incumbent powers *MUST* be removed from their positions, which is what is seen in Rev. 19:17-20:3 (allowing Christ and His co-heirs to take the sceptre and reign).

The Beast and false prophet will be dealt with first (19:20), the armies of the Beast (led by the kings of the earth [19:21]) will then be dealt with, and then Satan himself (which can only include his angels as well) will be dealt with (20:1-3).

Christ will then deal with the saved Gentiles, both those surviving the Tribulation in Matt. 25:31-46 and those having been slain during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17; 20:4-6).

And His dealings with these Gentiles, as His dealings with the Jews, will be *with a view to the KINGDOM*.

In short, *EVERYTHING* surrounding Christ's return will have *ONE thing at the forefront: the KINGDOM which He had gone away to receive.*

Gentile nations, comprised of unsaved Gentiles surviving the judgments of the Tribulation, will enter into the Millennium and populate the millennial earth. And *NOT ONLY* will they enter into this time in natural bodies, capable of procreation, *BUT* atmospheric conditions will once again be of a nature that man can, as in the antediluvian world of Noah's day, live for hundreds of years, even for the entire duration of the Millennium, in a natural body. Thus, the population of the earth, over time, *can ONLY increase, evidently dramatically.*

(The common thought and teaching that only saved Gentiles will enter into the Millennium is based on a misunderstanding of Matt. 25:31-46, attempting to make this section of Scripture teach a judgment of all the Gentiles at the time of Christ's return, both the saved and the unsaved.)

This though *is NOT* what Matt. 25:31-46 or any other section of Scripture teaches. The millennial earth, at the very beginning, will evidently be populated by unsaved Gentiles, forming nations, occupying different geographical locations throughout the earth.)

Israel will be placed at the head of the nations here on earth, with the Jewish people realizing their calling. A converted Jewish nation *will NOT ONLY* rule over the Gentile nations *BUT* will send the evangels out, worldwide, to reach the Gentiles with God's message; and God will bless the nations through Israel (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 43:7-11; Jonah 1:2ff).

(As the 144,000 of Rev. 7, 12, 14 will begin carrying God's message to Gentiles worldwide during the last half of the Tribulation [forming a first-fruit of the nation], the entire nation will continue this task during the Millennium [forming the main harvest].)

Then, in the heavens, Christ and His co-heirs will rule the nations as well, which will evidently be through representatives here on earth. And this could possibly be accomplished through the saved Gentiles seen on Christ's right hand in Matt. 25:34-40, who realize an inheritance in the kingdom.

(The present kingdom under Satan is structured after the preceding fashion. Powerful angels in Satan's kingdom rule from a heavenly sphere through men in corresponding positions of power here on earth [Dan. 10:12-20]. In this passage from Daniel, there is both a "prince of the kingdom of Persia" and "kings of Persia" [evidently lesser rulers under the prince] in the heavens, which would correspond to both the main ruler and lesser rulers under him who ruled over the Persian kingdom here on earth.

Governmental power and authority originates in the heavens — "the heavens do rule" [Dan. 4:26b] — and progresses from rulers in the heavens through rulers on the earth.

Governmental powers throughout the Gentile nations possess corresponding governmental powers in Satan's kingdom in the heavens in this fashion. Powers in the heavens rule through these corresponding powers on the earth. Or, to turn that around, the powers on earth govern under these corresponding powers in the heavens.

This is the manner in which the government of the earth is presently structured, which is also *the SAME manner* in which the government of the earth — all of the Gentile nations — will be structured yet future, though under Christ and His co-heirs rather than Satan and his angels.

There is *ONE exception* to the present structure — the government of the nation of Israel, for Israel is *NOT to be* “reckoned among the nations” [Num. 23:9]. Israel, though possessing a government of the same type, with powers in the heavens ruling through powers on earth [it *MUST*, for “the heavens do rule”], rules separate from powers in Satan’s kingdom. Israel’s ruling angel in this respect is Michael [with evidently a contingent of angelic rulers under him], separate from Satan’s kingdom [Dan. 10:21].

And, as previously noted, the coming kingdom of Christ *can ONLY* be established after the same fashion, with Christ and His co-heirs ruling from heavenly places through corresponding powers among the nations here on earth. This though would be over the Gentile nations alone [note that overcoming Christians have been promised power over the nations, *NOT over Israel* (Rev. 2:26, 27)].

The twelve apostles would seem to be the lone exception, having been promised power over the twelve tribes of Israel [Matt. 19:27-29]. And, since other rulers over Israel will be needed in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, these positions may very well be filled by Old Testament saints who qualified to rule from the heavens, or believing Jews in the gospels and Acts [*cf.* Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29; Acts 2:41; 4:4; Heb. 11:8-16.)]

“Life Eternal” and “Everlasting Punishment”

ALL judgments preceding the Millennium have the KINGDOM in view. But the wording of Matt. 25:41, 46 — those on Christ’s left hand going away into “everlasting punishment,” in “everlasting fire”; or those on His right hand entering into “life eternal” — would appear to clearly teach something different.

Such though is NOT the case at all.

There is a translation problem to begin with, and once this has been straightened out and the whole of the two parts of Matt. 25:31-46 are viewed together, along with being viewed in the light of related Scripture, particularly the larger context of the Olivet Discourse — comparing Scripture with Scripture — the matter becomes quite clear. In fact, when this is done, it becomes impossible

to teach that which is almost universally taught in this passage (*i.e.*, a judgment of both saved and unsaved individuals, with eternal verities in view [eternal life and/or eternal damnation]).

1) *The Translation Problem*

The translation problem lies in the words “eternal” and “everlasting” in Matt. 25:41, 46. In the English translation, “life eternal” is used relative to all those on Christ’s right hand, and “everlasting punishment” is used relative to all those on His left hand.

“Eternal” and “everlasting” in these verses are both translations of the Greek word *aionion*, which is the adjective form of the noun *aion*. Both words mean the same thing, which is a meaning other than “eternal,” though the words could be thought of in the sense of “eternal” if the context permits.

But thoughts of “eternal” **CANNOT** possibly exist in Matt. 25:31-36. Contextually, in this section of Scripture, the word *aionion* **could NOT possibly** be understood as “eternal” or “everlasting.”

(Neither the Hebrew text of the Old Testament nor the Greek text of the New Testament contains a word for “eternal.” *Olam* is the word usually translated “eternal,” “everlasting,” or “perpetual” in English translations of the Old Testament; and *aion* [a noun] or *aionios* [the adjective form of *aion*] are the words translated “eternal” or “everlasting” in the New Testament [*aidios*, an older form of *aionios*, used only two times and meaning exactly the same as *aionios*, is the only exception (Rom. 1:20 and Jude 6)].

Olam, *aion*, and *aionios* all have to do with “a long period of time,” which, if the context permits, can refer to “eternity” [*e.g.*, the *aionios* God in Rom. 16:26; *cf.* Ps. 136:1ff]. But the words standing alone, apart from a context, **CANNOT** be understood as “eternal.” *Context* is the all-important factor to ascertain the length of time in view when these words are used.

Aion and *aionios* are usually thought of and used numerous times in the New Testament in the sense of “an age.” And a usage of this nature is even brought over into English. For example, the English word “aeon [or ‘eon’]” is derived from the Greek word *aion*.

The only way in which the Greek text can express “eternal” apart from textual considerations is through a use of *aion* in the plural [*e.g.*, Luke 1:33; Heb. 13:8, referring to “the ages,” *i.e.*, ages without end,

which would comprise eternity] or a double use of *aion*, in the plural and articular both times [e.g., Rev. 1:6; 4:9, 10, referring to “the ages of the ages,” again, ages without end].

And the use of *aionios* in Matt. 25:41, 46, referring to an inverse of that seen in verse thirty-four [failing to realize an inheritance in the kingdom] can only be understood as “age-lasting.” It can only be understood as referring to the outcome of a judgment of unfaithful saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation.

A judgment of the unsaved, with eternal verities in view, *could NOT* possibly be the subject at hand in Matt. 25:41, 46. First, the context will not permit such an understanding of these verses; and second, inheritance in the kingdom, contextually, would limit this judgment to the *saved ALONE*. Note Rom. 8:17: “And if children, then heirs...”

“Sheep” and “goats” (vv. 32, 33), *can ONLY* be understood contextually as a metaphorical way of describing two classes of saved individuals, similar to the parable of *the wheat and the tares* in Matt. 13:24-30. The unsaved and eternal verities simply *CANNOT* be in view in either passage. Rather, in both passages, *ONLY the saved, with a view to an inheritance or non-inheritance in the KINGDOM, can be in view.*)

2) The Complete Text Itself

The problem seen with the common, erroneous interpretation of Matt. 25:31-46 when viewing the complete text has been alluded to in the previous data concerning *aion* and *aionios*.

That seen in this section of the Olivet Discourse is *a judgment of saved Gentiles at the time Christ returns, with the kingdom in view*. Yet, the translation, “eternal” in connection with those on Christ’s right hand and “everlasting” in connection with those on His left hand, completely removes matters from the issue at hand.

(The kingdom in view throughout the Olivet Discourse is the coming 1,000-year reign over the earth, when Christ and His co-heirs will sit on the throne seen in Rev. 3:21, “my throne [Christ’s throne],” and rule over the present earth.

The kingdom as it will exist beyond that time — after the destruction of the present heavens and earth [the heavens associated with the earth, *NOT* the universe as a whole] and a new heavens and new earth have been brought into existence, with power emanating from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” [II Peter 3:10ff; Rev. 22:1, 3] — is another matter.

The kingdom in view when Christ and His co-heirs reign over the earth from “my throne” has to do with the government of this present earth and will last for 1,000 years. This is the kingdom in view throughout all three sections of the Olivet Discourse, with the overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three having to do with this 1,000-year kingdom alone.

And, to enlarge upon the preceding, this is the kingdom in view any place in Scripture — Old Testament or New Testament — where promises have been made to Israel or to Christians regarding the kingdom. All distinctions for faithfulness and unfaithfulness — whether relative to Jews, Christians, or Gentiles — have to do with *this 1,000-year period ALONE, NOT with the eternal ages.*

The kingdom in view beyond the Millennium has to do with the new heavens, the new earth, and with power emanating from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” [which can only be universal in nature]; and this continuing facet of the kingdom will be *eternal* in length.

Refer to the “Conclusion” in this book for additional details on the preceding.)

The translation in the English text in Matt. 25:34, 46 has made “inherit the kingdom” (v. 34) synonymous with “life eternal” (v. 46) for those on Christ’s right hand, which *CANNOT* be true at all.

Realizing an inheritance in the kingdom *can ONLY* be equated with “life for the age,” *NEVER* with eternal life, which is *EXACTLY* how the Greek word *aionios*, used with “life,” should, contextually, be translated and understood.

And, in like fashion, contextually, “everlasting punishment” *can ONLY* be properly translated “age-lasting punishment.” That which those on Christ’s left hand receive would be the antithesis of that which the ones on His right hand receive.

Instead of realizing an inheritance in the kingdom, they would be rejected for this inheritance; and, instead of possessing life for the age, they would realize the opposite, expressed a slightly different way in verse forty-one — “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting [*aionios*, ‘age-lasting’] fire...”

3) Comparing Scripture with Scripture

To understand that meant by “age-lasting fire,” one of the

best places to begin is with the overcomer's promises in Revelation chapters two and three and see the same thing befalling nonovercoming Christians (also seen in a different fashion in the four parables in the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse). And this can be seen in the second of the overcomer's promises, in the message to the Christians in the Church in Smyrna, in Rev. 2:11:

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Not being hurt or being hurt of the second death is in connection with overcoming or not overcoming. The promise that the one overcoming *will NOT* be hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 clearly portends the opposite for the nonovercomer. That is, the overcoming Christian *will NOT be hurt of the second death, BUT, the nonovercoming Christian will be hurt of the second death.*

And the whole of the matter *is in relation to realizing or NOT realizing an inheritance in the KINGDOM, NOT with eternal life.*

The expression, "the second death," appears three times in Revelation chapters twenty and twenty-one (20:6, 14; 21:8), where it is used in connection with judgments of both the saved and the unsaved and where it is, as well, associated with "the lake of fire" in connection with the judgments of both the saved and the unsaved.

And in the light of Rev. 20:4-6; 21:7, 8, which deal with the saved in connection with overcoming or being overcome, referencing the second death, Rev. 2:11 *can mean ONLY one thing:*

Overcoming Christians, as stated in Rev. 2:11, *are NOT* going to be "hurt of the second death." But the inverse of that *has to be equally true as well*, for the promise carries a clearly implied warning. Nonovercoming Christians are going to be "hurt of the second death," defined in Scripture as having "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 though the Christians' works will be tried "by ['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. And it will be at this time, following judgment, that nonovercoming Christians will be “hurt of the second death,” which is associated with *the lake of fire*.

(Note in the judgment of the unsaved in Rev. 20:11-15 that the second death and the lake of fire enter into the matter *ONLY* following judgment. The second death and the lake of fire come into view *ONLY* following decisions and determinations pertaining to the judgment of the unsaved.

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 pertaining to their judgment, does the second death and the lake of fire come into view.)

a) *The Overcomer's Promises*

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.

There are seven different overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three, and each promise is *millennial in its scope of fulfillment*. That is, these promises will be realized by overcoming Christians, or they will fail to be realized by Christians who have been overcome, during the 1,000-year reign of Christ after Christians have had their works tried “by [‘in’] fire” at the judgment seat.

(*There can be NO such thing* as Christians being hurt of the second death beyond the Millennium, for Rev. 21:4 plainly declares that there will be no more death during this time. Former things of this nature will have passed away.

NOR can the Son invite Christians to sit on “my throne” [the seventh

and last overcomer's promise; Rev. 3:21] beyond the Millennium, for He will not be seated on this throne at that time. Instead He will be seated with His Father on "the throne of God and of the Lamb" [Rev. 22:1, 3].

During the Millennium, regal power over the earth will emanate from *the Son's throne above the present earth*.

But during the ages beyond, regal power over the universe will emanate from *the throne of God and of the Lamb on the new earth*.)

Christians have been saved with a view to being overcomers and bringing forth fruit. This matter comprises the very heart of the message which is to be proclaimed to Christians throughout the dispensation. Israel has been set aside during this time, and God is calling out another people — a separate and distinct people — "for his name," taken mainly from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14).

Those whom God is presently dealing with comprise an entirely new creation, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, forming *one new man* "in Christ." And God is extending to individual members of this one new man, to Christians, the privilege of overcoming and bringing forth fruit, with a view to their occupying positions as joint-heirs with His Son in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom.

God has set aside an entire dispensation for this purpose, and judgment at the end of this dispensation will reveal man's response to this privilege. 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 subject matter dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation.

b) Being Hurt of the Second Death

That which is in view concerning a nonovercoming Christian one day being hurt of the second death following decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, as previously seen, is explained later in this same book. The second death for the nonovercomer is

having a “part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8); and having a part in the lake of fire is explained through God’s dealings with the unsaved in the previous chapter as being “cast into the lake of fire” (20:15).

And seeing individuals cast into “a furnace of fire” in Matt. 13:42, 50 is simply another way of expressing the same thing.

(The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen deal with the Kingdom of the Heavens and fruit bearing, *NOT* with eternal salvation. Thus, the subject matter has to do with the saved, *NOT* with the unsaved.

Further, in Matt. 13:1, Christ going out of “the house” [a reference to Israel] and down by “the seaside” [a reference to the Gentiles], *the one new man* “in Christ” [about to be brought into existence at the time these parables were given] is seen throughout the first four parables. In this respect, those gathered out of Christ’s kingdom, which “offend” and “do iniquity,” who are cast into a furnace of fire, *can ONLY* be identified as saved individuals.

Also, this casting into a furnace of fire in Matt. 13:42, 50 *occurs BEFORE the Millennium*. The unsaved cast into the lake of fire in Rev. 20:15 *occurs FOLLOWING the Millennium*. *They are NOT the same.*)

But is the second death, being cast into the lake of fire, something which will be carried out in a literal sense? Or, is Scripture dealing with metaphors at this point? And, if the latter, what about the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium, in Rev. 20:11-15?

If one is literal, would not the other have to be literal as well?

Or, if one is metaphorical, would not the other have to be metaphorical as well?

c) *Allowing Scripture to Interpret Scripture*

In John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, where a burning with fire is referenced. And the context both places has to do with either bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, *which is EXACTLY the same thing* seen in the Matthew thirteen parables.

OR, as the matter is expressed in Revelation chapters two and three, it has to do with either overcoming or being overcome.

And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast into Gehenna (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 23:15, 33) or being cast into outer darkness (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Overcoming or not overcoming and being unhurt or being hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 is expressed a slightly different way in Rom. 8:13:

“For if ye [a reference to ‘brethren’ in v. 12] live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Whether Gehenna or outer darkness in Matthew, a burning with fire in John and Hebrews, being cast into a furnace or lake of fire in Matthew and Revelation, or suffering death 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, Gehenna, or a furnace or lake of fire *could NOT possibly be in view* (for these different places *could NOT possibly be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense*), *it is evident that metaphors are being used throughout.*

BUT, relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply NOT expressed other ways in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving NO room for any thought other than understanding the matter as literal, NOT metaphorical.

Aside from the preceding, it is clear that *ALL Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom.*

This is seen in type in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen. Both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (“a mountain” in Scripture signifies *a kingdom*).

But note the stark difference in the place which each occupied.

Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always stood (18:22; 19:27). Lot though found himself in a place separate from the Lord, in a place where he also had always stood (19:1, 30).

“Everlasting [‘Age-Lasting’] Fire”

“Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting [‘age-lasting’] fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

As has been shown, similar verses to the preceding are used different places in the New Testament relative to nonovercoming Christians. And, with this in mind, understanding how these verses are used, the matter concerning how that stated in Matt. 25:41 relative to those on Christ’s left hand is to be understood should be evident without further comment.

(Why does Scripture associate nonovercoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ’s millennial reign, in the manner previously seen [which would be the same for those on Christ’s left hand in Matt. 25:41]? 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*].

CONCLUSION

Man's Rule — Millennial, Eternal

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Ps. 8:3-6).

The Olivet Discourse, in each of its three parts, brings man to that point in history where he realizes *the purpose for his existence*.

In the Jewish section (24:4-39), Israel, passing through the Great Tribulation, is ultimately brought into the place where the nation exercises the rights belonging to the firstborn.

In the Christian section (24:40-25:30), the Church, following the adoption, is brought into the position of God's firstborn, with Christians then exercising the rights of primogeniture.

In the Gentile section (25:31-46), Gentiles reached through the ministry of the 144,000 during the Tribulation are brought into a position of *inheritance in the kingdom*, portending that which will result from the entire Jewish nation carrying God's message to the Gentile nations of the earth during the Millennium (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18; Isa. 43:7-11).

(As will be seen in the latter part of this concluding chapter, God had *far-reaching, regal plans for man at the time of his creation*, extending beyond the Millennium and the earth out into the universe during the ages beyond.

And Israel, reaching the nations of the earth with God's message during the Millennium, will be instrumental in effecting the salvation of untold numbers of individuals from these nations, individuals who will then evidently figure prominently into God's plans and purposes for man beyond the Millennium.

A beginning of the outworking of these plans and purposes is seen through a first-fruit of the nation, the 144,000, reaching Gentiles throughout the world during the Tribulation.

Then, the entire nation carrying God's message to the Gentiles throughout the world during the Millennium will complete the task.)

Man will ultimately hold the sceptre and occupy the throne. He was created for this purpose, and God will not change His mind concerning the reason He called man into existence (Rom. 11:29).

God's purpose, as given in the creation account in Genesis (1:26-28), will be realized at the time of Messiah's return. The incumbent rulers (Satan and his angels) will be put down, and man will be elevated to his rightful position over the earth.

The eighth Psalm is Messianic in its scope of fulfillment (though there appears to be a facet of the Psalm which *will not* be fulfilled until the eternal ages beyond the Millennium, discussed in the latter part of this chapter).

This Psalm views man occupying the position for which he was created, something man *has NEVER done* in the history of his existence (aside from that which might be viewed as a first fruit in the Old Testament theocracy).

Verses four through six of the eighth Psalm are quoted in Heb. 2:6-8 within a context which leaves *NO room* to question that which is in view.

Immediately preceding this quotation, reference is made to *an inherited, so great salvation*, which will be realized when this earth has been placed *in subjection to man* rather than angels (1:14-2:5; cf. v. 8b).

And immediately following this quotation, reference is made to the ultimate purpose for Calvary;

Redeemed man MUST be placed back in the position for which he was created through "bringing many sons unto glory" (vv. 9, 10).

Man's Rule During the Millennium

Man's rule during the coming age will be confined to this earth. It is this one province in the kingdom of God over which Satan and his angels rule, and it is this same province over which man will one day rule in the stead of angels.

Christ will rule in the stead of Satan, wearing the crown which Satan presently wears; and those ascending the throne and ruling as *joint-heirs with Christ* will wear crowns presently worn by two classes of angels—fallen and unfallen, but all originally associated with Satan's rule (II Sam. 1:10; 2:11; 5:3-5; Rev. 4:10, 11; 19:12).

1) A Rule Over the Earth

Israel will rule *upon the earth* at the head of the nations, with Christ seated on David's throne in the midst of His people.

Christians though, along with certain Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs, will rule *from the heavens over the earth*, exercising power from Christ's Own throne. In this respect, Christ will have a dual reign; and governmental power and authority will be exercised from both *an earthly* and *a heavenly* sphere.

Christ will sit on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem upon the earth, and He will also sit upon His Own throne in the new Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth (Luke 1:32, 33; Rev. 3:21).

It will actually be those ruling from the heavens who will ascend the throne and exercise power as joint-heirs with Christ at this time.

Israel upon the earth will simply be the ruling nation; and though power and authority will emanate from the *two thrones* upon which Christ will sit (both *David's throne upon earth* and *His Own throne in the heavens*), the individual, joint-heir relationship which will exist in the heavenly realm *will NOT exist in the earthly*.

Those comprising the earthly seed of Abraham *do NOT* possess the same promise as those comprising the heavenly seed in this respect. Though both are to "possess the gate" of the enemy (rule over the Gentiles) and the Gentile nations are to be blessed through both (Gen. 22:17, 18), *ONLY* those comprising the heavenly seed will ascend the throne to rule as joint-heirs with Christ.

Satan and his angels presently rule *from the heavens over the earth*. Satan is the “anointed cherub [messianic angel]” placed over this earth, along with a great host of subordinate angels who rule with him (Ezek. 28:14; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7).

Angels ruling under Satan exercise their power and authority *through rulers upon the earth*. They possess counterparts in the earthly sphere, through whom they rule. In this respect, there is a gradation of rulers upon the earth which corresponds to a gradation of rulers in the heavens.

During Daniel’s day, following the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, attention was called to *heavenly rulers* referred to as “the prince of the kingdom of Persia,” “the kings of Persia,” “the prince of Greece,” and “Michael your prince” (Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21).

A messenger had been dispatched from heaven and sent to earth in response to Daniel’s prayer. In order to reach earth, this messenger had to travel through the realm in which Satan and his angels ruled, and he was detained in this realm by the angel in Satan’s kingdom who ruled over Persia — “the prince of the kingdom of Persia.”

Michael came to help, and during this time the messenger remained in this heavenly realm with “the kings of Persia.” These kings were evidently subordinate rulers who exercised power from the heavens with the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” over the Persian kingdom upon earth.

One can only deduct from Dan. 10:12-21 that the gradation of rulers in the earthly kingdom of Persia had a corresponding gradation of rulers in the heavenly kingdom, with the rulers in the heavenly sphere exercising power *through* those in the earthly sphere.

Also the heavenly messenger, while speaking to Daniel, referred to “the prince of Greece” (v. 20), an apparent allusion to the Grecian kingdom (possessing both heavenly and earthly rulers) which would one day rise to a position of power and conquer the Medo-Persian kingdom.

One other interesting piece of information is also given in this chapter of Daniel. “Michael your prince” (v. 21) is a reference to *the heavenly ruler over Israel*, showing a sharp distinction between

Israel and the Gentile nations. Though Israel is a nation among nations upon earth, Israel, with respect to the nation's calling, is not to be "reckoned among the [Gentile] nations" (Num. 23:9).

Israel alone, of all the nations, possesses *NO* ruling angel in Satan's kingdom. Israel is *a special creation in Jacob* (Isa. 43:1), allowing this nation to be recognized after a separate fashion from the Gentile nations. Israel's prince is *Michael*, a ruling angel in God's kingdom who exercises power and authority separate from the power and authority exercised by Satan and his angels.

It is this present angelic rule from the heavens, referred to in Daniel chapter ten, that Christ and His co-heirs will exercise in the stead of angels during the coming age (Heb. 2:5-10).

And as it is today, so will it be then: Rulers in the heavenly realm will exercise power *through* rulers in the earthly realm.

There will be earthly rulers throughout the various Gentile nations as well as in Israel. The times of the Gentiles will have ended, and the Gentiles will be subordinate to Israel's rule upon earth; and rulers in the heavens will exercise power *through* rulers in both Israel and the Gentile nations on earth.

2) *A Rule for the Overcomers*

Man's rule, realizing the purpose for his existence, will begin when the millennial kingdom has been established; and this rule will continue throughout the eternal ages.

Israel and the Gentile nations will continue to exist as separate, distinct entities right on into the eternal ages on the new earth, apparently figuring prominently in God's government of the new earth; and those ruling as co-heirs with Christ will exercise a type power and authority which will not end after the Millennium has run its course but extend on into the eternal ages as well.

A sharp distinction though MUST be recognized between the exercise of power and authority during the Millennium and the exercise of power and authority during the eternal ages. Christians who reign with Christ during the Millennium will continue to reign with Christ throughout the eternal ages, *but it MUST be recognized that the overcomer's promises are strictly millennial in their scope of fulfillment.*

Overcomers will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ for faithfulness during the present time, with a view to being recompensed during the one thousand years Christ reigns over the earth. In this respect, it is incorrect to refer to *rewards* as being “eternal,” *for they are NOT*. Christians will exercise power after an entirely different fashion from a different throne during the eternal ages.

That the overcomer’s promises are *millennial ALONE* in their scope of fulfillment can be demonstrated several ways.

And this would be in perfect keeping with the foundational framework of Scripture, set forth at the very beginning — showing everything occurring throughout the six days (foreshadowing the present 6,000 years, Man’s Day) pointing to that which would be realized on the seventh day (foreshadowing the future 1,000-year Sabbath, the Lord’s Day).

Within a positive framework, it can be shown that the overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three *are millennial ALONE in their scope of fulfillment*.

And, within a negative framework, it can be shown that the forfeiture of one’s birthright *can occur ONLY under conditions which will exist during the Millennium, NOT beyond*.

3) *The Overcomer’s Promises — Millennial ALONE*

In Rev. 2:26, 27, overcoming Christians have been promised “power over the nations.” They will rule the Gentile nations with “a rod of iron,” and this authoritarian rule is compared to the power which a potter could command over his vessels by shattering them into fragments at will — “...as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.”

Such a scene can exist ONLY during the Millennium.

The entire purpose for the Millennium is *to bring ALL things under subjection to Christ at the ONE place in the universe where sin entered, producing disarray*.

And a rule such as that described in Rev. 2:26, 27 will occur during this time in order to bring this to pass.

God is going to take one thousand years to allow His Son to reinstitute *complete order* in that part of the kingdom where *disorder* occurred.

After the Son has accomplished this work, He will deliver “up the kingdom to God, even the Father” (I Cor. 15:24-28); and an authoritarian rule with a rod of iron over the nations of the earth will be a thing of the past.

In Rev. 3:21, overcoming Christians have been promised that they will be allowed to sit with Christ on His throne:

“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.”

Such a promise *could NOT possibly* extend into or be fulfilled during the eternal ages, for Christ *will NOT* be seated on a throne fitting the description set forth in Rev. 3:21 during ages beyond the Millennium.

The Son today is seated at His Father’s right hand, on His Father’s throne (though He is exercising the office of High Priest rather than reigning with His Father).

During the Millennium the Son will be seated on His Own throne as the great King-Priest (He will have terminated His present high priestly ministry, will have left His Father’s throne, and will have assumed the long-awaited, promised position on His Own throne).

At the end of the Millennium though, Christ will relinquish this position (for all things will have been brought under subjection) and once again assume a place on the throne with His Father.

This throne will be called, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3), and Christ will then reign with His Father apart from exercising any type priestly office (there will be no sin following the Millennium and thus no need for a priestly ministry).

Thus, promises such as those in Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21 *MUST* be looked upon as millennial in their scope of fulfillment.

4) *Forfeiture of One's Birthright — Millennial ALONE*

There are two classic examples in the Old Testament of individuals forfeiting the rights belonging to the firstborn — Esau and Reuben.

Esau forfeited his birthright for a single meal (Gen. 25:27-34;

27:1-38), and Reuben forfeited his birthright because of sexual impropriety (Gen. 35:22; 49:3, 4). Esau's birthright went to his younger brother, Jacob; and Reuben's birthright was divided among three of his younger brothers — Judah, Levi, and Joseph.

The fifth and last of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews has to do with the possibility that Christians can, in like manner, forfeit their birthrights, disqualifying them from exercising the rights of primogeniture during the coming age (Heb. 12:14-17).

The account of Esau forfeiting his birthright is set forth as a type, with Esau's experience foreshadowing that which can also be experienced by Christians.

Esau considered his birthright to be a thing of little value *UNTIL* after the rights belonging to him as firstborn had been forfeited and he awoke to the stark reality of that which had occurred. *THEN, and ONLY THEN*, did Esau realize the true value of the birthright.

Esau, seeking to reverse that which had occurred, tried to get his father to change his mind and bless him also, *but to NO avail* (cf. Gen. 27:38; Heb. 12:17). The birthright *was NO longer his and could NOT be retrieved*. As a result, Esau "lifted up his voice, and wept" (cf. Gen. 25:34; 27:38).

Esau's condition and state of mind at this time point to the same condition and state of mind which will exist among Christians who forfeit their birthright. This forfeiture will be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ, and the results of this forfeiture will exist for the duration of the Millennium.

The same cry by Christians which Esau voiced will produce the same results. The blessing belonging to the firstborn will have been bestowed upon faithful Christians; and the Father *will NOT, He CANNOT*, change His mind and bless the unfaithful as well, else He would violate His Own Word.

The results of such a forfeiture though *CANNOT* exist beyond the Millennium. All tears will be wiped away at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 21:4 [the reference to all tears being wiped away prior to the Millennium in Rev. 7:17 is *ONLY* for a select group of individuals realizing an inheritance in the kingdom]), and conditions relating to the forfeiture or nonforfeiture of one's birthright *CANNOT* really apply beyond this point in time, beyond the Millennium.

The wiping away of all tears at the end of the Millennium would portend equality within a realm where equality *had NOT* previously existed. It would clearly appear that during the subsequent eternal ages distinctions among Christians such as those set forth in the overcomer's promises or conditions having to do with the forfeiture or nonforfeiture of one's birthright *will NO longer exist*.

Man's Rule During the Eternal Ages

At the end of Man's Day, immediately preceding the beginning of the Millennium, *a change in the government of this earth will occur*; then, at the end of the Millennium, immediately preceding the beginning of the eternal ages, *a change (though of a different nature) in the government of the universe will occur*. And man will be actively involved in changes which will occur at both times.

Scripture provides a great deal of information concerning man's part in the government of the earth during the Millennium. The whole of Scripture, after some fashion, is focused upon this time.

When one moves beyond the Millennium though, Scripture provides very little information concerning the exact place which man will then occupy within God's universal government. There are only several brief statements in Scripture concerning government within the kingdom of God beyond the Millennium.

But within these brief statements enough is revealed to clearly show that God has far-reaching plans for man which only begin to unfold during the Millennium.

Viewing that which is revealed in the whole of Scripture concerning the government of the universe within God's kingdom, a person can be drawn to only one conclusion: When God created man, there were actually both near and far purposes in view.

The near-purpose had to do with *the government of this earth*, and the far-purpose had to do with *the government of the universe*. In this respect, the Millennium is *ONLY the beginning* of an unending number of ages during which *man will exercise power and authority, realizing the purpose for his existence*.

During the Millennium, Christ will sit on *His Own throne* and rule over this earth, and others will ascend the throne and rule

as co-heirs with Him. And Christ, with His co-heirs, will take one thousand years, ruling with a rod of iron, to effect order out of disorder. Once *complete order* has been restored, the kingdom will be turned back over to the Father; and numerous changes, having to do with the government of the universe during all the subsequent ages, will resultingly occur (I Cor. 15:24-28).

When that part of the kingdom previously placed under the Son's control has been turned back over to the Father, "the Day of the Lord" will end and "the Day of God" will begin. At that time, the present heavens and earth will be destroyed, and a new heavens and a new earth will be brought into existence.

(The "heavens" would refer to that part of the heavens associated with this earth and kingdom, not the galaxy or universe as a whole. Scripture outlining the destruction of both the heavens and the earth [II Peter 3:10-12] could possibly be brought to pass through God causing our sun to nova. Note that there will no longer be a need for the sun [Rev. 21:22-25].)

After the new heavens and new earth have been brought into existence (II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1), God will then change the location of His throne from which He rules the universe.

The throne of God today is located in *a northernmost point in the universe* (Isa. 14:13), north of this present earth.

God's throne will remain in this place during the Millennium; but during the eternal ages, God's throne will be located *in the new Jerusalem*, which will be the capital of the new earth.

And not only will God's throne be in this new locality, but the Son will sit on this throne with His Father. God's throne, at this time, will specifically be called, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:3-5; 22:1, 3).

1) God's Rule Over the Universe

God rules the universe today from His throne in *the far reaches of the North*, but He will one day rule the universe from His throne in *the new Jerusalem*.

This is a change which will occur at the end of the Millennium and exist from that point throughout the eternal ages.

Through viewing the overall scope of the kingdom of God in Scripture, there is a clear inference that this earth is only one province among many in the kingdom. God's rule in this kingdom extends throughout all the galaxies of the universe; and from a Scriptural perspective, innumerable provinces similar to the earth exist elsewhere in the universe, apparently in all the galaxies (Ps. 103:19-22).

Scripture provides a glimpse into this facet of God's government of the universe in the Book of Job. In Job 1:6; 2:1, on two different occasions, the "sons of God" are seen presenting themselves before the Lord, with Satan appearing "among them."

Satan, a son of God appearing "among them," demonstrates *equality with them* (all angels are "sons of God" because of a special, individual creative activity of God). Satan was the messianic angel ruling over one province in God's kingdom (the earth), and the only logical conclusion which could follow is that the other sons of God were messianic angels ruling over other provinces in God's kingdom (other worlds).

The appearances of these sons of God could only be *congresses of these messianic angels*, who apparently appeared at regularly scheduled intervals in God's presence to provide a report relative to their provinces in the kingdom. Such meetings would occur at the "mount of the congregation ['meeting place in the mount'], in the sides of the north ['in the utmost parts of the north']" (Isa. 14:13).

A "mount" in Scripture signifies *a kingdom* (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:35, 44, 45). The thought from the expression "mount of the congregation" in Isa. 14:13 would thus be, *the meeting place [where the messianic angels assembled] to render a report concerning activity in their province, within God's kingdom, located in God's presence at a northernmost point of the universe.*

The earth is one of nine planets (a number that astronomers have questioned in recent times) revolving around a medium-size star (our sun), and it has been estimated that our own galaxy contains between two to four hundred billion such stars (suns) — some much larger, some much smaller.

The distance from the earth to the nearest star outside our solar system is four and one-third light years, and the distance to

the farthest star in our galaxy is thousands of light years.

It is one hundred thousand light years across our galaxy and between two million and two and one-half million light years from our galaxy to the nearest neighboring galaxy. Beyond that, man has been able to reach out with telescopes and view stars estimated to be billions of light years removed from this galaxy (a light year is the distance light travels in one year — approximately, six trillion miles).

In the light of God's government of the universe, as revealed in Scripture, it is interesting to note how present-day astronomers view our own galaxy as they study the heavens through their telescopes. Discoveries during modern times have revealed that there are undoubtedly billions of solar systems in our own galaxy, similar to our solar system (a star [a sun], with revolving planets), with apparently billions of other galaxies existing in the material universe (where solar systems have also been discovered in nearby galaxies). And this whole area of study has become a major field in astronomical research today.

For years, astronomers couldn't actually see these revolving planets. But, through the use of computerized lighting techniques developed in recent years, systematic blockages of light could be detected — blockages of a nature which could only be attributed to planets revolving around stars (suns) — along with an evident gravitational pull exerted by these planets on the stars around which they revolve.

But, during the past few years, with more powerful telescopes and advanced technology (*e.g.*, the Hubble telescope which has provided additional data relating to the matter), astronomers have been able to actually see many of these planets revolving around distant stars, confirming what they already knew, with the Bible confirming from data written over 3,000 years ago that they are correct.

Any way one views the matter, the vastness of the universe over which God rules is staggering. David could look into the heavens during his day, viewing only a small part of one galaxy (only a minute part is visible to the naked eye [not more than about 2,000 stars can be seen by the naked eye at any one time — approximately

1/500,000th of the total visible in the most powerful telescopes, or between approximately 1/100,000,000th to 1/200,000,000th of the estimated total in this one galaxy alone]), and proclaim,

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Ps. 8:3-6).

Man today can view the heavens through telescopes, seeing things far beyond what David could see with the naked eye, and do no more than respond with similar thoughts, asking the same question.

David gave the answer to the question, and the answer is still the same today and will remain the same throughout eternity.

Man is the one whom God created to have dominion over the works of His hands (v. 6).

2) *Man's Place in God's Eternal Rule*

The eighth Psalm could be understood *in its ultimate scope* in the sense of dominion out in the heavens. Such dominion during the coming age must, of necessity, be confined to *the earth*; but during the eternal ages, dominion exercised by man will extend into *the heavens* as well.

It seems apparent that *apart from man* the earth would be no more than just another province in God's kingdom, ruled over by a messianic angel.

But the creation of man has *changed* all of this. Man's creation has offset the scales completely, for, following man's creation, the earth was revealed to not only be *the most significant place in the galaxy but in the entire universe as well*.

The reason for all of this is evident. The creation of man is *peculiar to this earth*, and man was created in *God's image and likeness* for the specific purpose of *possessing dominion over the works*

of God's hands. Dominion throughout the universe is exercised by angels, and angels *were NOT* created in God's image and likeness.

Man was made "a little lower than the angels," for he was created to possess dominion held by angels, which man *did NOT* hold following his creation (*NOR* has man held it to this day). Even Christ appeared on this earth, apart from His Glory, in the same position as man — "a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:7, 9).

Such though will change at the beginning of the Millennium and change again after a different fashion at the beginning of the eternal ages.

At the beginning of the Millennium, man will replace angels ruling over one province; and man will rule in their stead.

During the eternal ages though, man will not necessarily replace angels in other provinces, as on the province ruled by Satan and his angels (that which awaits Satan and his angels was occasioned by sin, and there is no record or intimation that sin entered any other province in the universe).

Man in that day may possibly occupy positions under God over provincial governors. Such a thought would be in perfect keeping with Paul's question in I Cor. 6:3, "Know ye not that we shall judge ['rule' (*cf.* v. 2)] angels?" Then, again, man might rule new worlds or ungoverned worlds.

We're simply NOT told.

When God created man after His image and likeness, immediate plans for man had to do with *this earth*. However, since man will exercise regality with Christ from a throne having to do with *the administration of universal government* following the Millennium, an entirely new light is cast upon God's creative activity in the first chapter of Genesis.

God, at the time He created man, had far-reaching plans for His creature, as well as the earth. And these far-reaching plans will be realized *ONLY* when *complete order has been restored in the one province where sin entered, a new earth has been brought into existence, and universal power emanates from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the new Jerusalem, the capital of the new earth.*

APPENDIX I

ANTI-SEMITISM

Designed to Ultimately Effect Israel's Repentance

“And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, 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: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn” (Ex. 4:22, 23).

“Anti-Semitism,” from a strict adherence to the compound structure and meaning of the word itself, can be defined simply as *being against (antagonistic toward, opposed to) the Semitic people*. In a grammatical and etymological sense (as pertaining to race), such a definition would include *all the descendants of Shem (i.e., the Arabic nations as well as the nation of Israel)*.

The word “anti-Semitism” though is not really used in a broad sense pertaining to the entire Semitic line. Rather, the word is invariably used in a much more restrictive sense, referring to opposition exhibited toward *ONLY one branch of the Semitic line* — opposition exhibited toward the descendants of Shem through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines *anti-Semitism* as “having or showing prejudice against Jews,” “discriminating against or persecuting Jews,” “...hostility toward Jews.” *The Jewish people ALONE*, among the Semitic people, have been the target of persecution after persecution for over three and one-half millenniums; and “anti-Semitism” is an expression which has come into use pointing to these persecutions.

Other Semitic nations are NOT in view at all.

“Anti-Semitism” is actually older than the nation of Israel itself. All anti-Semitic acts occurring over the centuries can be traced back to a common point in history. The roots of all Jewish persecution can be found in that which began to occur in Egypt, preceding the birth of Moses and the subsequent birth of the nation of Israel, at a time when *a new king arose over Egypt*, “which knew not Joseph” (Ex. 1:8ff).

Jewish persecution *which began under this new king in Egypt* has been continued by the leaders of nation after nation for over thirty-five hundred years of human history; and the results of such hostile action taken toward the Jewish people have always been the same. Chaos (economic, political, etc.), defeat, destruction, and even annihilation *have ALWAYS followed* in the wake of nations having a part in anti-Semitism.

The outworking of the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 *have ALWAYS come to pass*, and *they ALWAYS will come to pass*.

A nation lifting its hand against Israel is, in actuality, lifting its hand against itself. Hostility, for example, which is carried to the extreme point of genocide (more than one nation has tried it), is *the MOST sure way possible to commit national suicide*.

The epitaph written on the tombstones of nations throughout history which undertook anti-Semitic practices reads: “*Fallen because of their vain attitude toward and ill-treatment of the nation of Israel.*”

The Why of Anti-Semitism

WHY does anti-Semitism even exist in the first place? Or, *WHY* have nations not taken a lesson from history?

WHAT is it really all about when a nation (such as Russia, Egypt, Syria, or Iran) exhibits open hostility toward Israel, traveling the same self-destructive path taken by its predecessors?

WHAT really lies behind such hostile actions?

WHY did the Third Reich during the World War II years single out the Jewish people for destruction? *WHY* has Russia fomented anti-Semitism in her own country and in the Middle East for decades? *WHY* did the late Egyptian president, Gamel Abdel Nasser, immediately preceding the Six-Day War in 1967, announce, “*Our*

basic aim is the destruction [note: not 'defeat,' but 'destruction'] of Israel"? WHY did the late Israeli prime minister, Golda Meir, view the situation from her vantage point after the same fashion during the succeeding Yom Kippur War of 1973 when she said, "We are defending our very existence [from surrounding nations, supported by Russia]"? WHY has the leader of Iran in more recent times continued echoing this same type anti-Semitic rhetoric?

WHY has Israel been threatened to this extent by different nations over the years, completely ignoring the warnings from Scripture or the outworking of these warnings, the lessons from secular history?

Answers to questions concerning the "WHY" of anti-Semitism can be found in *the Word of God ALONE*. Secular history can comment upon the matter and record a persecution of the Jewish people down through the years, but such history can NEVER reveal either the true origin of anti-Semitism or the reason for the continuance (and even acceleration today) of persecution directed toward the Jewish people.

ONLY the Word of God provides this information. And apart from an understanding of that which Scripture reveals concerning the matter, *it is NOT possible* to assess, and place in its proper perspective, a segment of mankind's hatred for a people which God called into existence for special and particular purposes, which includes being the channel through which God would bless the very nations seeking their destruction.

The Beginning of Anti-Semitism

When God called Abraham out from Ur of the Chaldees, He promised Abraham *a seed and a land*. Abraham and *his seed* were to inherit for an everlasting possession *the land* "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:7, 8).

Abraham was to become the progenitor of "a great nation" which would dwell in this land, through which blessings would flow out to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17, 18).

God NEVER gets in a hurry to fulfill His promises; NOR does

God ever forget that which He has promised. Even though the land of Canaan had been given to Abraham and his seed before Abraham even possessed a seed, neither he nor his seed came into immediate possession of this land. Rather, *they were sojourners in and out of the land of Canaan, awaiting the reception of their inheritance at a future time* (Gen. 23:4; 37:1; Ex. 6:4).

Abraham dwelt as a *stranger* and a *pilgrim* in both the land of Canaan and the land of Egypt for twenty-five years, and the seed of Abraham then dwelt as *strangers* and *pilgrims* in both of these lands for four hundred years. It was after this, after the end of the four hundred-year sojourn of the seed of Abraham, that God set about to fulfill His promise given to Abraham four hundred and thirty years prior to the termination of this time — a promise given at the time of Abraham's call, while he was still in Ur of the Chaldees (*cf.* Gen. 12:1-4; 15:13, 14; Ex. 2:23-25; 3:6-8; 4:22, 23; 12:40-41).

(The "four hundred years" in Gen. 15:13, 14 provide the time of the sojourn of *Abraham's seed* [from the birth of Isaac to the Exodus from Egypt]; the "four hundred and thirty years" in Ex. 12:40, 41 cover the same period but include an additional thirty years preceding the four hundred years, dating to *Abraham's call* in Ur at the age of seventy.

Thus, *the full sojourn* — that of both *Abraham and his seed*, called collectively, "the children of Israel" — was "four hundred and thirty years." And this period of time was marked off by God *to the very day*: "...even *the selfsame day* it came to pass..." [Ex. 12:41; *cf.* Gal. 3:17, 18].)

The Israelites were in Egypt two hundred and ten of the four hundred years of Gen. 15:13 (*cf.* Gen. 25:26; 47:28). Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, prior to the seven years of plenty (Gen. 41:46). The children of Israel (all the house of Jacob) went down into Egypt about nine or ten years later, during the time of famine (Gen. 41:53-57; 42:3; 43:15; 45:6-13; 46:26-28; 47:27, 28). Thus, the death of Joseph at the age of one hundred ten (Gen. 50:24-26) was about seventy years into the two hundred and ten years which the Children of Israel spent in Egypt.

It was *following* Joseph's death but *preceding* Moses' birth (about sixty years later) that "there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8; *cf.* Ex. 1:15-2:10). Moses was

eighty years old at the time of the Exodus (Acts 7:20-37). Thus, the emergence of the new king over Egypt occurred probably as much as a century (or possibly even slightly longer) before the time God stepped in and called Moses to lead the people out.

The new king who arose over Egypt between the time of Joseph and the time of Moses was *an Assyrian* rather than an Egyptian (Isa. 52:4). The Assyrians had come down and conquered Egypt, taking over the government and establishing a new dynasty of a different nationality.

In Stephen's address before the religious leaders in Israel some sixteen hundred years later (Acts 7:1ff), attention was called to this fact through the use of the Greek word *heteros*. The word "another [*another king...which knew not Joseph*]" (v. 18) is a translation of this Greek word (the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament also uses this same word in Ex. 1:8).

The word *heteros* refers to "another of a different kind"; and the reference is to *a different kind of king*, one of a different nationality, bringing into existence a different dynasty. An Egyptian dynasty had previously been in power; but the Assyrians came in, took over the government, and a new dynasty of a different nationality came into existence.

This is the reason that the governing power in Egypt looked upon the Israelites as "more and mightier than we" (Ex. 1:9). This statement *would NOT be true if all Egypt were in view*. "We" in this verse has to do with *the Assyrians living in Egypt and controlling the affairs of state*.

It is in Exodus chapter one, during the reign of "the Assyrian" in Egypt, that anti-Semitism in its true form first appears in Scripture. And this is the point in Scripture where one must begin in order to properly understand why the Jewish people have been targeted for persecution after persecution throughout a period which has spanned millenniums.

The growth, prosperity, and potential power of the Israelites in Egypt had become such that it caused the Assyrians controlling the affairs of state to look upon them as a possible threat to their continuance in power (should they one day side with the enemies of the Assyrians).

To prevent such from occurring, the Assyrians first attempted to stem the growth and, in this manner, check the potential power of the Hebrew people through a rigorous form of enslavement.

After a time, when it became evident that this was not the answer (for “the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew”), they then resorted to a plan whereby all of the Hebrew male children would be slain at birth.

It was during these days that Moses was born, hidden by his parents, and eventually, through the providence of God, *was reared under the very protection of Pharaoh, in the palace itself* (Ex. 1:7-2:10).

Once this persecution began in Egypt, there is no indication in the Word of God to anything other than that it continued without interruption (in a very stringent manner) right up to the time of the Exodus.

It existed during years preceding Moses’ birth, at the time of his birth, during the forty years while he was growing up in the palace, and during the forty additional years which he spent in Midian.

In fact, the persecution became so intense during the latter years, that the cry of the Israelites “came up unto God by reason of the bondage.” And, when this occurred, in complete accordance with later promises to Israel, God kept His Word (*cf.* Lev. 26:39-42; II Chron. 7:12-14),

“God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them” (Ex. 2:24, 25; *cf.* vv. 11-23).

This is the place in the Book of Exodus where attention is directed back to Moses (3:1ff); God, at this time, called Moses to not only deliver His people from Egyptian bondage through leading them out of Egypt but also to lead them into the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The four hundred and thirty-year sojourn of the children of Israel was about to end; and once this period of time ended, the Israelites were to go forth under Moses to possess the land of Canaan and therein realize the purpose for their very existence.

The End of Anti-Semitism

That which occurred in the Book of Exodus, both preceding and during Moses' day, constitutes a type of that which is about to occur.

Under the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt, *anti-Semitism began, reached its apex, and was then terminated insofar as the power of Egypt was concerned.*

This points in the antitype to that time when, under another Assyrian, the present existing anti-Semitism will take on *a similar dimension, reach a similar apex, and then be terminated insofar as the power of— NOT just Egypt — but ALL the Gentile nations are concerned.*

Thus, in this respect, the story of anti-Semitism as it exists from beginning to end, is revealed in Old Testament history.

The Assyrian controlling affairs of state in Egypt is a type of the Assyrian (the Antichrist [Isa. 10:5; 14:25; Micah 5:5; cf. Dan. 8:8-14]) who will control affairs of state throughout the world during the coming Great Tribulation ("Egypt" is always a type of *the world* in Scripture). And the persecution of the Jewish people in Egypt during the reign of the former foreshadows a persecution which the Jewish people will undergo during the reign of the latter.

The *ten plagues* brought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt (note: "ten," showing *ordinal completion*) point to *God's complete judgment* brought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian — past (in the type), and future (in the antitype).

This complete judgment befell the kingdom of the Assyrian following Moses' return to His people, and it led to the destruction of Gentile world power in the Red Sea.

In the antitype, this complete judgment upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in history, following Moses' return, points to that which will befall the kingdom of the future Assyrian, following Christ's return.

Judgments occurring during the Tribulation will extend into Christ's return and be climaxed following His return, with the climax of these judgments (resulting in judgmental completeness) seen in the destruction of Gentile world power when Christ treads the winepress.

(For more information on these judgments, refer to Chapters XVIII, XIX in the author's book, *The Time of the End.*)

The deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, following God's complete judgment upon the kingdom of the Assyrian, was with a view to their being established in the land of Canaan under the old covenant and realizing the very purpose for their existence.

In the antitype, this points to a future deliverance of the Israelites under the One Who is greater than Moses, following God's complete judgment upon the kingdom of the coming Assyrian; and this deliverance, as in the type, will be with a view to the Israelites being established in the land under — not the old covenant — but the new covenant and realizing the very purpose for their existence.

In this respect, the Book of Exodus is *NOT ONLY* a historical account *BUT* also a prophetic account.

1) *The Death of the Firstborn*

The death of the firstborn was *the last of the ten plagues* brought upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt (Ex. 11:1ff). This, of course, has its parallel in *the last of the judgments* which will be brought upon the worldwide kingdom of the Assyrian yet future.

The terminal judgment upon the future kingdom of the Assyrian will issue forth from the last of the trumpet and vial judgments (same judgments, described two different ways) extending out into the time of Christ's return.

And after all of these judgments have come to pass, "a great voice" is going to come "out of the temple of heaven, *from the throne*, saying, '*It is done*' [a perfect tense verb — 'It has come to pass' — referring to that which has been completed in past time, which presently exists in a completed state]" (Rev. 16:17).

"What" will have been completed in past time, existing in a completed state, at the time this voice comes forth from the throne? Relative to Israel and the nations, *it can ONLY be one thing*.

As in the type, so in the antitype: *The firstborn in Egypt died in the type; and the firstborn with respect to the Gentile nations, typified by Egypt, MUST die in the antitype*.

And this, in turn, *EXACTLY as in the type* (Israel on the eastern banks of the Sea, singing the victor's song, with the power of Egypt beneath the waters of the Sea [in the place of death]), will allow God to bring Israel forth, in a regal respect, as *His recognized firstborn*.

(The death of the firstborn in Egypt had to do with both individuals and with nations comprised of these individuals. It had to do with Israelites and the nation of Israel, and it had to do with Egyptians and the nation of Egypt.

God's provided substitute for the Jewish people had to do *NOT ONLY* with the firstborn in a family *BUT* with the nation as a whole, with God's firstborn son. And the lack of a substitute apart from Israel had to do with firstborn sons throughout the nation of Egypt and with the nation of Egypt itself [which *could ONLY* have been recognized as *the firstborn* within Satan's realm, for Egypt was the central ruling nation of that day under Satan and his angels].)

God told Moses to announce to Pharaoh:

"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22).

And when God told Moses to make this announcement to Pharaoh, *nations* were in view. And the announced firstborn status of Israel alluded to *the birthright*.

Israel was the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture, *NOT Egypt*. Israel was the nation which God recognized as the one possessing *the right to hold the sceptre which Egypt held*.

Such an announcement to the Pharaoh of Egypt would be *inconceivable*. The lowly nation of slaves, in subjection to the most powerful nation of that day, *was the nation which God recognized as His firstborn*.

Moses was further told to say unto Pharaoh:

"Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Ex. 4:23).

The service which God required of His son involved Israel's establishment in the land of Canaan at the head of all the Gentile nations. In this position, the nations were *NOT ONLY* to be *ruled by Israel* (the regal function of the birthright) *BUT* they were to be *blessed through Israel* (the priestly function of the birthright).

Thus, God's threat to slay Pharaoh's firstborn, though referring to the firstborn in his household (Ex. 12:29), *MUST* be looked upon in a broader sense than just a reference to Pharaoh's flesh

and blood firstborn son. It *MUST* be looked upon as also carrying *national implications*, for that was the subject at hand (“Israel is my son, even my firstborn...Let my son go...”).

The complete scope of God’s threat to Pharaoh MUST include a nation as well (Ex. 14:27-31) — the nation of Egypt.

Satan and his angels presently rule the earth from the heavens through the Gentile nations (Dan. 10:13, 14, 20). Egypt, as the ruling nation of that day, was the one to whom Satan would have bequeathed the rights belonging to the firstborn.

(Note that Satan is the great counterfeiter; and it is evident from the account in Exodus, when understood in the light of his position among the nations, that his work in this realm *could ONLY carry over into the “rights of primogeniture” on a national scale.*)

As Satan had delivered these rights to the Assyrian ruling over Egypt during Moses’ day, he will deliver these same rights to the Assyrian ruling over the entire world during that future day preceding Christ’s return. And, as there was a national death of the firstborn then (as well as individual), there will be a national death of the firstborn yet future (as well as individual).

Just as Egypt was put down in view of Israel occupying her proper place with respect to the nations in the past, the kingdom of this world will be put down in view of Israel occupying her proper place with respect to the nations yet future. The position of “firstborn” *MUST be occupied by the one possessing this right.*

Following Israel’s departure from Egypt under Moses, the Assyrian Pharaoh and his armed forces were overthrown in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:13ff). The firstborn (individuals) throughout all the kingdom in Egypt died when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt on the night of the Passover. Then, Egypt itself, the nation exercising the firstborn status under Satan, experienced death at the hands of the Lord through a destruction of the Assyrian and his armed forces in the Red Sea.

Israel, though, lived still. A substitute (the paschal lamb [Ex. 12:3ff]) had been provided as a vicarious sacrifice for the firstborn (both individually and nationally); and the nation, as God’s firstborn, stood triumphant on the eastern banks of the Red Sea,

ready to go forth and realize the rights belonging to the firstborn.

As it was, so shall it be: The future Assyrian and his armed forces will be overthrown (Rev. 19:17-21); and, as in the type, there will be both *a personal* and *a national death of the firstborn* in connection with this overthrow. The Antichrist and those comprising his kingdom will *personally* experience the death of the firstborn; and the destruction of the worldwide kingdom of the Assyrian — that future kingdom exercising a firstborn status under Satan — will constitute *the national death of the firstborn*.

Israel, though, will live still. A Substitute (the Passover Lamb [I Cor. 5:7]) has been provided as a vicarious sacrifice for the firstborn (*individuals*) within the camp.

Through Israel's acceptance of the Passover Lamb in that day, a *nation* will be "born at once" (Isa. 66:8); and this nation, following the overthrow of the kingdom of this world, will *stand triumphant* (as did the nation on the eastern banks of the Red Sea in history), ready to go forth and realize *the rights belonging to the firstborn*.

2) *An End of All the Nations*

God, in Jer. 46:28, has stated that He would one day deal with all of the Gentile nations in a final respect:

"Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whether I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee..."

This is *NOT ONLY* exemplified through teachings drawn from the type under consideration *BUT* also from an event which occurred during the second month following the Exodus.

After the Israelites had entered into Rephidim, the Amalekites moved against the nation. And because of this, God stated concerning the Amalekites:

"I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Ex. 17:8-14).

The Amalekites were *the first* of the Gentile nations to war against Israel following the birth of the Israeli nation and their

departure from Egypt (Num. 24:20). And God's pronounced judgment upon this nation, in keeping with the principles set forth in Gen. 12:2, 3, establishes "a first mention" principle, which is in keeping with Jer. 46:28.

(The "law of first mention" in Biblical interpretation states that *the first time a subject is mentioned in Scripture, that subject remains unchanged throughout Scripture.*)

The Amalekite nation was to be "utterly" *put out of remembrance from under heaven*; and the same basic thing is said of the Gentile powers existing during the Tribulation (the last of the Gentile powers to war against Israel). In Isa. 26:13, 14, God has stated concerning "other Lords [rulers of the Gentile nations during that time]" that He has "visited and destroyed them, and made all their *memory* to perish."

THAT which befell the first WILL also befall the last.

Insofar as the "first of the nations" was concerned, the Israelites became the appointed executioners of the Amalekites (Deut. 25:17-19); but because of repeated failures to carry out the Lord's command completely, the Amalekites remained in existence as the bitter enemies of the Israelites for over seven hundred years beyond the Exodus (*cf.* I Sam. 15:2, 3, 7-9; II Sam. 1:6-10). The sentence pronounced upon the Amalekites in Ex. 17:14 was not carried out in its completeness until the days of Hezekiah (I Chron. 4:39-43); and from that point in history, the Amalekites ceased to exist.

Although the Amalekites figured prominently in Old Testament history, dating all the way back to the days of Abraham (Gen. 14:7), archaeologists have failed to unearth a trace of this nation's existence. *The Amalekites were literally blotted out of existence.*

In a similar fashion, God is going to "make a full end of all the nations" where the Israelites have been driven. The textual setting of this passage in Jer. 46:28 is during and following the coming Great Tribulation. The nations are those within the kingdom of Antichrist, a worldwide kingdom, which will include *ALL nations*.

Anti-Semitism in that day — evident from the matter at hand in Matt. 25:31-46 and from that which is revealed concerning the kingdom of Antichrist (Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Rev.

12:1-17) — will break out on a worldwide scale and will be of such magnitude that the Israelites (as the Israelites in Egypt) will be forced to cry out to God for deliverance (*cf.* Hosea 5:15-6:2).

At this time, as in the past, God will *hear* their cry, *remember* His covenant, and *send* a Deliverer — the One greater than Moses.

Then that which befell the kingdom of the Assyrian in Egypt will befall the worldwide kingdom of the Assyrian yet future; and that which befell the first of the nations to come against Israel will befall the last of the nations to come against Israel.

Though God will make a “full end of all the nations,” numerous Gentiles will enter into the Millennium, forming nations. The “full end of all nations” has to do with *national power, a firstborn status.*

The nations under Satan are now exercising this status, as Egypt in the type. But, as also seen in the type, *matters are about to change.*

A change will have to occur because of that which God began to work out almost four and one-half millenniums ago:

“Blessed be Jehovah [the personal name of Israel’s God], the God of Shem...” (Gen. 9:26a, literal rendering).

Shem was *the ONLY one* of Noah’s three sons having a God, and the nation descending from Shem through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is *the ONLY nation* on earth today possessing a God, Who is identified as Jehovah, the one true and living God.

And *it is THIS nation* which God recognizes as *His firstborn*, which necessitates that seen in the type occurring in the antitype.

Gentile power MUST be put down, with Israel subsequently elevated to the nation’s rightful place within a restored theocracy.

It will NOT, it CANNOT possibly happen ANY other way!

God has brought these things to pass concerning Israel’s status relative to the nations, He has spoken through the prophets concerning that which is about to happen, and THAT is the END of the matter.

The Reason for Anti-Semitism

The position presently held by the Gentile nations, the position which Satan holds relative to these nations, and the position which Israel was called into existence to hold *MUST* all be taken into

account to show the reason for both the beginning and continuance of anti-Semitism. There is a definite reason and a definite unchanged systematic plan underlying anti-Semitism; and this reason and plan have remained unchanged since the days of the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt.

The Gentile nations presently hold the sceptre; and Satan, along with his angels, presently rules from the existing kingdom of the heavens through the Gentile nations upon the earth.

However, Israel is the nation possessing the right to hold the sceptre. Israel is *God's firstborn son*, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture; and God's firstborn is *destined to one day hold the sceptre*.

Satan knows this; he has known this for millenniums. And ever since that time when the Assyrians came down and conquered Egypt (under the direction of Satan [Satan and his angels ruled through the Assyrians, and the Israelites were in Egypt]), Satan has sought to destroy Israel through the Gentile nations.

He knows that the day God establishes Israel in her rightful place, his power over the nations will cease to exist. He knows that his complete kingdom, as anti-Semitic nations down through the years, will fall; and the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3), a vain last attempt at power (Rev. 20:7-9), and the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10) will be all that await such a fall by the one who "made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms" (Isa. 14:16).

The reason for anti-Semitism — *it's very obvious*: Satan, who rules the earth through and controls the Gentile nations, *is doing ALL within his power to destroy the ONE nation which is a threat to continued Gentile power, and thus his continued rule*.

Satan has moved and continues to move Gentile powers against Israel simply because *Israel is God's firstborn son*, the *one nation possessing the rights of primogeniture*; and he will continue in this unchanging manner *UNTIL* his hostile actions against Israel, which will reach *an APEX* under the Antichrist during the Tribulation, *are terminated by Christ Himself at the time of His return*.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6).

APPENDIX II

ANTI-CHRISTIAN

Involvement in the Present World System

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. 13:31, 32).

Satan is presently directing his activities against two groups of people in the world. On the one hand he is moving against *Israel*, and on the other hand he is moving against *the Church*.

He has been at war for centuries, extending into millenniums, against both *the old creation in Jacob* and *the new creation in Christ*.

The reason is very simple and obvious: Both of these creations occupy their place in time at the center of God’s preordained activity surrounding His Son throughout the ages (*cf.* Heb. 1:2); and the purpose for the very existence of both, when realized, will result in the end of Satan’s present rule over the earth.

Satan has sought for millenniums to use the Gentile nations to do away with Israel, and he has been following a somewhat similar pattern during the past two thousand years in his efforts to do away with Christianity.

Satan and his angels hold the sceptre in the heavenly sphere of the present kingdom, and the Gentile nations hold the sceptre under Satan and his angels in the earthly sphere. And Satan has used the Gentile nations down through the years as his main instrument to destroy Christianity.

Within this framework, power from the heavenlies is exhibited through an earthly rule among the nations in Satan's ever-continuing anti-Semitic and anti-Christian endeavors. The Gentile nations are being used by Satan *on both fronts*, though in different ways; and *this is a fact which MUST be recognized.*

(For additional information on Satan and his angels' present rule from the heavens through the Gentile nations here on earth, refer to chapter XXIV in this book, pp. 382, 383.)

A Beginning Through Rome

So long as Christianity was thought of as associated with Judaism, the Romans had little problem with Christians in the empire, for Judaism was recognized as "a legal sect."

BUT once the Romans began to view Christianity as separate and distinct from Judaism, problems arose — major problems.

When the persecution of Christians began under Rome, Satan, for the *first time*, had the entire matter within the scope of *his kingdom and control*; and this is where one really finds the master plan of Satan, as it relates to the Church, beginning to unfold.

Christianity, separate from Judaism, came under the banner of the Roman state; and because of the nonallegiance of Christians to the state, it was seen as "an illegal religion."

"Religion" and "State" were *ONE in the Roman Empire*. The people were polytheistic in their worship, and this extended over into the realm of emperor-worship (they deified the emperor); *they worshipped many gods, but only one king: Caesar.*

On the other hand, "Christianity" and "State" were *separate in the Roman Empire*. Christians were monotheistic in their worship; *they worshipped the one true and living God, and their only King was Christ.*

Christian practices were looked upon as *treasonable* in some quarters, not only because they spoke of a King other than Caesar, but also because they refused to join in emperor-worship.

Thus, Christianity gradually became quite unpopular among the Romans; and by the time of Nero (54-68 A.D.), Christians were ready-objects for that which was about to occur — *a long-lasting*

persecution at the hands of Rome.

The event that sparked the beginning of the official persecution of Christians by rulers in the Roman Empire was their being accused of arson when Rome burned in 64 A.D. (a year or two following the close of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel). And, although this persecution was limited to Christians in Rome itself, *the precedent for and manner of persecuting Christians in the empire was established at this time.*

Christians were burned as human torches, thrown to mad dogs, and slain in other grotesque fashions. And such persecutions were continued at intervals and spread throughout the empire by nine of Nero's successors over the next two hundred and fifty years.

But just as a persecution of the Israelites in Egypt resulted in their multiplying and growing (Ex. 1:12), thus it was with a persecution of Christians. And the Church, under Roman persecution, experienced phenomenal growth, which began to progressively spread throughout the empire.

Then, by the year 200 A.D., Christians could be found in all parts of the empire; and by the year 250 A.D., it is estimated that Christians constituted five to twelve percent of the population of the empire, a population totaling about 75,000,000.

This is what led Tertullian, one of the early Church fathers living during the time of Roman persecution, to say, "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*"

Not all was well with the Church during these years though.

False doctrine began to make inroads during about the last one hundred fifty years of Roman persecution. *Gnosticism* made its appearance in the Church during this time. *The Origen school of interpretation* then followed (Origen's system of theology resulted in the influence of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, with its inherent amillennial eschatology). *The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes* (a priestly class elevated to a position over the common people) was also becoming widespread.

Then, toward the latter part of this period (about the last fifty years), the Church began to become *wealthy*. In fact, by the close of this period, Christianity had become the richest religious organization in the Roman Empire.

Thus, as a whole, by the time of Diocletian (the last of the persecuting emperors [284-305 A.D.]), the Church was *NOT* at all the same as it had been during the period of early Roman persecution under Nero. In one sense, the Church was ripe for *the greatest tragedy* that has ever befallen Christianity, a tragedy which some historians, who do not understand Christianity at all, have erroneously called, "The Triumph of Christianity."

The persecuting edicts of Diocletian were repealed during the opening years of the fourth century by Constantine the Great after he came 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*.

These efforts of Constantine began a sequence of events which, during the latter part of the 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."*

Rather than Christianity converting the world, the world had converted Christianity.

It is this position, assumed by the Church, beginning during the time of Constantine, that some have erroneously called, "The Triumph of Christianity," when, in fact, it was just the opposite. The "Triumph" was on Satan's part, *NOT* Christendom's part.

Satan THEN had the Church EXACTLY where he wanted it.

Where *the pagan persecuting emperors had failed* (although not completely, for Christianity was gradually corrupted during their reign), *the so-called Christian emperors succeeded*. Satan had attacked the Church from *without* during the reign of the persecuting em-

perors; but once the persecutions stopped and Christianity began to be *one with the state*, the attack by Satan then *came from within*.

Beyond Rome to the Present

It took Satan about three and one-half centuries to bring the Church completely within his sphere of governmental control.

THEN, what is referred to as “The Dark Ages” (an expression, not “ages” per se) in Church history rapidly ensued, lasting for over one thousand years.

And even though the Reformation (16th century, with a subsequent restoration of great prophetic truths [17th-20th centuries, attaining fruition in the 19th and 20th centuries]), followed “The Dark Ages,” the Church as a whole *has NEVER* really departed from the position it began to assume during the time of Constantine. Segments of Christendom, at times, have stood apart, *but NOT the Church as a whole*.

And this has continued into modern times.

(The remainder of this article is either drawn from or reflects back upon the third of seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

The first four of these parables have to do with the introduction of an entirely new entity relative to Christ’s ministry and the proffered kingdom of the heavens, with this new entity later revealed to be *the Church* [Matt. 16], subsequently called into existence on the day of Pentecost [Acts 2].

Further, a complete, succinct history of the Church was given in these first four parables, before the Church was even called into existence.

For information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*. Also, see the introduction to the author’s book, *Christians — After the Rapture*.)

1) *It Becometh a Tree*

The parable of the grain of mustard seed in Matt. 13:31, 32 — the third of seven parables in this chapter — reflects upon the position in which the Church has found itself since the time of Constantine.

The mustard seed, “the least of all seeds,” was to germinate, grow, and become “the greatest among herbs.”

However, the mustard seed in the parable germinated, experienced *an unnatural growth*, and became “a tree.” Not only this, but following the germination and growth of the mustard seed into a tree, “the birds of the air” came and *lodged in its branches*.

“A tree” in Scripture symbolizes *a national power*.

In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, “trees” represent *nations* which sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel 4:10-12 refers to a vision of “a tree in the midst of the earth,” having *a great height* which “reached unto heaven.”

The interpretation of the vision is given later in the chapter (vv. 20-22), and “the tree” is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon*. Babylon had grown strong, its greatness reached unto heaven, and its dominion reached to the ends of the earth.

Then in Luke 21:29-32, Christ not only referred to *the nation of Israel* under the symbolism of “a fig tree” (cf. Matt. 21:18, 19; 24:32), but He also referred to *Gentile nations* under the symbolism of “all the trees.”

(Refer to Chapter VIII in this book for information on “the fig tree” and “all the trees.”)

There can be no question concerning Scripture identifying “trees” in a symbolic sense with *national powers*; and this fact, along with the fact that the grain of mustard seed (another symbol) germinated and subsequently experienced an unnatural growth, *MUST* be understood to correctly interpret Matt. 13:31, 32.

The next thing to note is the fact that after *the national power* appeared, “the birds of the air” found places to lodge *within that power*.

Again, one is not left to his own understanding to ascertain the interpretation. In verse four, in the first of the seven parables in this chapter, “the fowls” came and devoured the individuals “sown by the wayside” (literal understanding derived from v. 19 [ref. ASV]; the reference is to Christians sown at specific places in the world, with a view to their bringing forth fruit [ref. v. 8]).

Then in verse nineteen, in the interpretation of this parable, “the fowls” from verse four are identified with “the wicked one.”

The words “fowl” in verse four and “birds” in verse thirty-two are translations of the same word in the Greek text, and understanding these parables in the light of one another, the “birds” which found a place to rest in the branches of the tree *can ONLY* be identified with *the agents of Satan*.

That is, after that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed germinated, took an unnatural growth, and became a world power, the agents of Satan simply moved in. Through *an unnatural growth*, following the germination of the grain of mustard seed, *the agents of Satan found a quite natural place to lodge*.

Now, note what *can ONLY* be looked upon as the overall interpretation, which will reveal the identity of that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed. Interpreted in the light of the two preceding parables (which are explained in the text), *ONLY one thing can be in view*.

The first two parables concern Satan’s move against Christianity, and it is no different in the third parable. The grain of mustard seed, the object of attack in the parable, *can ONLY* represent the Church which, somewhere along the way, experienced an unnatural growth and became a world power, *something it was NOT supposed to become at all*.

And there *is ONLY one place* in history to which an individual can go to show the fulfillment of such an event.

This is what began to occur during the time of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, reaching its consummation in the latter part of the century when Christianity was declared to be *the OFFICIAL and ONLY religion of the Roman Empire*.

The Church was wed to the world. The Church, through its association with a world power after this fashion, was looked upon as being *one with that power*; and Satan, with his agents, found it to be *a very natural thing to simply move in and begin exercising some measure of control*.

Note the sharp contrast between the work of Satan in verse four and his work in verse thirty-two.

In the former verse, Satan devoured Christians (*cf. I Peter 5:8, 9*); but in the latter verse, *there was NO need for Satan to devour them*.

The Christians in this verse had joined his ranks, and *he, along with his agents, simply positioned himself among them*. They were no longer in a position to bring forth fruit through proclaiming a true witness concerning the kingdom; and he, as a consequence, simply left them alone.

2) *It Remaineth a Tree*

Within the scope of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, once a course of action had been taken, *there was NO turning back* (e.g., “till the whole was leavened” in the parable of the leaven [v. 33]); and once fruition had been attained, the text appears to clearly indicate that *NO change would occur throughout the remainder of the dispensation in relation to that which had come to pass*.

This, then, leaves the final form given in the parable as that form which would carry through to the end of the dispensation. That is, once the mustard seed had germinated and grown into a tree (the final form revealed), it would, from all indication, *continue as a tree for the remainder of the dispensation*.

Not only so, but *the birds of the air would also remain in its branches (again, the final form revealed) for the remainder of the dispensation*.

There is *NO intimation* at all that, sometime during the course of the remainder of the dispensation, the tree could one day become a mustard bush — or anything else — possibly resulting in the birds of the air departing, etc.

In fact, such a thought, aside from being contrary to sound interpretation within the scope of the parable, *is contrary to any Scripture bearing upon the course of Christianity throughout the dispensation*.

(The dispensation would end with Christendom completely leavened, as seen in the Matthew thirteen parables; or, presented another way in Scripture, the dispensation would end with Christendom in a Laodicean state [“...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”], as seen in Revelation chapter three.

And the Church at the end of the dispensation, during the day in which we live, is so blinded to the position which it is supposed to occupy that Christians forming these Churches have little to no understanding of that which has occurred and continues to occur, with the end result seen Luke 18:8:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [*lit.*, ‘the faith’] upon the earth?”

“The faith” has a peculiar reference in the New Testament to the Word of the Kingdom; and the way in which the question is worded in the Greek text of Luke 18:8, *a negative response is indicated*.

That is, when the Son of Man returns, he *is NOT* going to find “the faith” being taught in the Churches of the land, liberal and fundamental Churches alike [this is *the ONE place* where the two find common ground; *neither* will have anything to do with the Word of the Kingdom].)

Within the symbolism of “a tree” — from the time of Constantine to the present time — Christendom has found and continues to find itself *EXACTLY* where Satan wants it. Christendom has been and continues to be associated with “a tree,” *a world power* (which would have to be *Gentile world power* during the present dispensation).

Now, *HOW* does all of this continue from the time of Constantine even unto today? *HOW*, or in what manner, is Christianity still associated with Gentile world power, which would have to be the case with the continuing symbolism of the tree in Matt. 13:32?

The matter is evident on every hand, but it is something which is possibly *even more deceptive today than at any other time in history*. After all, the “leaven” which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 has been working for almost two millenniums, and Satan has been allowed the same length of time to sharpen the cutting edge of his master plan.

Over a period of hundreds and hundreds of years, Satan, in progressively carrying out his plans and purposes, has created such confusion that no segment of Christendom has escaped unscathed (*cf.* Luke 18:8). Those from the liberal wing and fundamental wing have, *both alike*, fallen prey to the wiles of Satan in the area of world government, as he has continued to foster the association of Christians with that symbolized by “a tree.”

The crux of the plan of Satan is to involve Christians in the PRESENT kingdom, an involvement which can ONLY detract from the things in which they are supposed to be involved — things having to do with the COMING kingdom.

The coming kingdom of Christ is symbolized in Scripture by “a great mountain” or “a high mountain” (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:35; Matt. 16:28-17:5), and *the ONLY escape* for Christians in the world today is to go “to the mountain.”

In fact, it is, “Escape for thy life [‘soul’]” (Gen. 19:17).

There is *NO such thing* as a Christian being actively involved in both “the tree” and “the great mountain.” When a Christian becomes interested in “the tree,” he loses interest in “the great mountain,” and vice versa.

Thus, the great deception of Satan revolves around his efforts to keep the Christians’ attention centered on *the present “tree”* rather than upon *the coming “great mountain”*; and this deception has been present and effectively executed for hundreds of years.

Never in modern times has Satan’s deception in this area been more clearly exhibited in this country than in the presidential campaign of 1960.

Churches throughout the land, seemingly from every denomination, comprised of literally millions of Christians, became very active — not within the sphere of *the Christians’ calling*, which is both *heavenly* and *future* (associated with “the great mountain”) — but within the sphere of *present world government upon the earth* (associated with “the tree”).

Christians throughout these Churches sought to tell the world that God didn’t want a certain man in the highest office in this land because he was a Roman Catholic (a “double play” on the whole matter — *Christians telling the world how to conduct its affairs, and a major world religion [Christian associated] being a determining factor in Christians seeking to direct the course of Gentile world power*).

But all was for naught; God saw fit to place this man in office anyway (Dan. 4:17, 25, 26), in spite of what His household servants had previously sought to do about the matter — household servants who were supposed to have been conducting their affairs in the realm of that which the Householder had left in their charge but, instead, had associated themselves with “the tree” and had been conducting their affairs in *a completely wrong realm*.

And it is little different today. One of the great cries one hears day after day after day over the religious radio stations and

religious TV broadcasts, especially within what is recognized as “fundamental Christianity,” is the call for an increased association of Christians with world government. Christians on every hand are continually being exhorted to involve themselves within the political structure of this present world system. They are being exhorted to band together for purposes of becoming a powerful force or voice in the present system, and a Christian who doesn’t follow suit is looked down upon as being among the uninformed.

Once again, *it would NOT be* “The Triumph of Christianity” should Christians find themselves controlling, after any fashion, Gentile world power today. In fact, as with the association of Christianity and Rome, beginning during the time of Constantine, it would be just the opposite.

Modern-day Christian thought relating to the association of Christians with the state *would NOT have been welcomed at all within the Church until at least the latter part of the second century.*

THEN, by the fourth century, the thought of Christians associating themselves with the present government of the earth would have been right at home in the Church, as it continues to exist today.

Those individuals exhorting Christians to become involved in the political structure of this present world system are, in reality, encouraging Christians to *forsake their high calling and become involved in matters totally unrelated to their calling.*

And for Christians to do this is for those Christians to involve themselves in affairs related to *the wrong kingdom* — the present kingdom of Satan rather than the coming kingdom of Christ.

Resultingly, should Christians find themselves exercising any measure of control in present Gentile world government — influencing legislation, holding office, etc. — *they would ONLY find themselves exercising a measure of control in an alien realm, a control NOT becoming their high calling at all.*

Unlawful Striving

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet is he NOT crowned, except he strive lawfully*" (II Tim. 2:4, 5).

Christians involving themselves with the "affairs of this life" are not striving lawfully. Jesus specifically stated that His kingdom was "not of this world [present world system under Satan]."

Christ did NOT call upon His servants to involve themselves on His behalf in the world system then, and *He does NOT* call upon His servants to involve themselves on His behalf in the present world system (which is still *the SAME system*).

"If my kingdom were of this world, *THEN* would my servants fight...*BUT NOW* is my kingdom *NOT from hence*" (John 18:36).

The Christians' warfare is in an entirely different realm. This warfare is clearly revealed to be against spirit beings in the heavens, the rulers of the present kingdom, the ones presently ruling the earth through the Gentile nations:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world [*lit.*, 'against the world rulers of the present darkness'], against spiritual wickedness in high places [*lit.*, 'against the spirit forces of wickedness in heavenly places']" (Eph. 6:12; *cf.* vv. 10-18).

Lawful striving is in THIS sphere, NOT within the sphere of world government upon the earth (cf. Matt. 6:33); and a man will be crowned ONLY after striving lawfully, which could ONLY have to do with striving in the correct realm.

One of the surest ways for a Christian to disqualify himself for a crown and position with Christ in His kingdom *is through unlawful striving, striving in the wrong kingdom.*

The entire world system under Satan is presently in its death-throes and is to be destroyed by Christ Himself when He returns. Christians having works associated with the present system will one day see their works suffer the same fate which the system is about to suffer.

Such works will be *destroyed*, burned "in fire" at the judgment seat. And even though such Christians will be "saved [eternal

salvation]; yet so as by [“through”] fire” (I Cor. 3:11-15), they will be left with *NOTHING of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ*.

Lawful striving

“Fight the good fight of faith [‘Strive in the good contest of the faith’], lay hold on eternal life [‘lay hold on life for the age’ (saving of the life/soul in relation to the Messianic Era)], *whereunto thou art also called...*” (I Tim. 6:12).

Christians are spoken of in Scripture as contestants in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27).

The word “striveth” in I Cor. 9:25 and the word “fight [‘strive’]” in I Tim. 6:12 are from the same word in the Greek text. This word is *agonizomai*, from which we derive our English word “agonize.” Christians are to strain every muscle of their being as they strive to be victorious in the race.

The object in view in I Cor. 9:24-27 is a “crown”; and in I Tim. 6:12, the object in view is “life for the age,” described in I Tim. 6:19 as “that which is really life” (literal translation).

“Life for the age,” or “that which is really life,” has to do with the *salvation of the soul/life*; and “crowns” will be worn by those who *realize this life*. These are the ones who will occupy positions as *co-heirs with Christ, reigning as crowned rulers with Him during the coming age*.

“Lawful striving” is *running the present race of the faith in the proper manner*.

“The faith” has to do with *the things surrounding one’s calling*; it has to do with *that heavenly land, one’s inheritance, that which is really life*.

Running in this race involves *proper preparation* (cf. James 1:2-4, 12, 21; II Peter 1:5-11; Jude 3, 20-25) and *an engagement of the correct enemy, after the correct fashion, in the correct realm* (Eph. 6:11-18).

The “goal” in view is *victory* and the subsequent *realization of one’s calling*.

A Christian can overcome, or a Christian can be overcome; a Christian can strive lawfully, or a Christian can strive unlawfully.

These are facts which MUST be recognized in the present race of the faith.

Victory comes through lawful striving ALONE, for a man is "NOT crowned, except he strive lawfully" (II Tim. 2:5).

"So run, that ye may obtain" (I Cor. 9:24).

APPENDIX III

AGES AND DISPENSATIONS

AGES

AS DISTINGUISHED FROM "DISPENSATIONS"

The Greek New Testament uses the word for "age" (*aion*) one hundred twenty-six times. And an indiscriminate translation of *aion* has resulted in a major problem surrounding a proper understanding of "ages."

The word has, numerous times, been translated in the KJV either "world" or "forever" (e.g., Matt. 12:32; 13:22, 39, 40, 49; 21:19; Mark 4:19; 10:30; 11:14; Heb. 1:2; 5:6; 6:5, 20).

Actually, in the KJV, there are only two instances in the entire New Testament where *aion* has been translated "age" (Eph. 2:7; Col. 1:26).

Other versions (e.g., NASB, NIV) have, on the other hand, rendered the word as "age" in many instances, though still frequently remaining with the KJV translations, "world" and "forever."

Then, to further complicate the issue in the KJV, the Greek word *genea* (appearing in a plural form and meaning "generations") has been translated "ages" twice (Eph. 3:5, 21), and the former mistranslation has resulted in a very misleading thought pertaining to ages.

In Eph. 3:21 both *aion* and *genea* appear together, and both have been mistranslated in the KJV.

Genea, appearing in a plural form, has been translated "ages"; and *aion*, appearing twice and meaning, within its structured usage, "of the age of the ages" (referring to the climactic age in a sequence of ages, i.e., to the Messianic Era [which is the subject matter leading into this verse — vv. 1-11]), has been translated "world without end."

(*Aion* and *genea* also appear together in Col. 1:26; and, unlike Eph. 3:21, both words have been translated correctly in the KJV — "...hid from ages and from generations...")

To translate *genea* as "ages" in Eph. 3:5 sets forth an issue concerning ages which is not at all in accord with the overall teaching of Scripture.

Scripture sets forth the thought that a series of ages began at the time of the creation of the heavens and the earth (I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2), which move toward and reach a climax with the Messianic Era.

That is, the 1000-year Messianic Era is the climactic age in a series of ages — ages in relation to the present heavens and earth — which began with the creation of the heavens and the earth and the placing of Satan over the earth as the earth's first provincial ruler.

The basic problem though with understanding the word meaning "generations" as *ages* in Eph. 3:5, limiting the time to Man's Day, has to do with the thought that generations come and go during Man's Day, *but this would NOT be true relative to ages*. The whole of Man's Day — 6,000 years — actually covers *ONLY one age*, *NOT* many ages as Eph. 3:5 in the KJV would lead one to believe.

Scripture makes it quite clear that *ONLY two ages* exist within the framework of the 7,000 years referred to by the seven days in Gen. 1:2b-2:3. One age covers the first 6,000 years, and the other age (the climactic age) covers the last 1,000 years.

To understand this within its Scriptural framework, note Matt. 12:31, 32.

In these verses, reference is made to two ages, connected with what is called "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [attributing to Christ an exercise of supernatural power emanating from Satan rather than from the Holy Spirit]." And the sin of committing this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit by the religious leaders in Israel was such that it would not be forgiven them, "neither in this world ['age'], neither in the world ['age' (not in the Greek text, but implied)] to come" (v. 32).

That is, there would be no forgiveness during either the age

in which they lived or in the age which would follow. And, the action by the religious leaders in Israel (looked upon, in a larger respect, as having to do with the entire nation), followed by Christ's announcement to them, forms the major turning point in Matthew's gospel.

It was on "the same day" in which this occurred that "Jesus went out of the house [alluding to *the house of Israel*], and sat by the seaside [alluding to *the Gentiles*]" (Matt. 13:1; cf. Dan. 7:2, 3; Matt. 23:38; Rev. 13:1).

It was also on this same day that Christ began to teach extensively through the use of parables.

Then it was shortly after these things occurred that the Church was first mentioned and the ministry of Christ moved more toward the thought of the Cross rather than the Crown (cf. Matt. 16:17-23; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19).

And then, anticipated by all the preceding, the announcement was finally made by Christ in Matt. 21:43 that the kingdom (the proffered heavenly sphere of the kingdom which had been rejected) would be taken from Israel and would be given "to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The two ages referred to in Matt. 12:32 cover 7,000 years of time — the age covering Man's Day, and the age covering the Messianic Era. And this is quite easy to illustrate.

Looking Forward in Time

Note the account of the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-30.

This ruler approached Christ with the question, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (v. 17). And Christ told him *EXACTLY* what he must do (vv. 19-21)

Christ's answer had to do with obedience to that which God had commanded, *denying self, taking up one's cross, and following Christ* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

Contextually, the words "eternal life" in verse seventeen could be better translated, "life for the age." The word "eternal" in the English text is a translation of the Greek word *aionios* (the adjective form of the noun *aion*, meaning "age").

Confusion can only result when a person attempts to read into this passage that which is not there, while ignoring that which is there.

The subject is *entrance into the kingdom during the coming age*, NOT *eternal life* which exists during the present age and extends throughout all the following ages (the present age, the Messianic Era, and all the ages beyond).

And, verse thirty clearly shows that “age” has to be the correct understanding of *aionios* in verse seventeen.

In verse thirty, following the translation in most English versions, Christ refers to “eternal life” in the “world to come [some versions translate, ‘age to come’]” (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV).

The overall thought set forth in the various translations of this verse though is not what the Greek text states at all.

In the Greek text, *aion* and *aionios* both appear together, referring to the same period of time. *Aion* has been translated “world” (or correctly, “age,” in some versions); and *aionios* has invariably been translated “eternal” (as in v. 17).

The latter part of Mark 10:30, climaxing Christ’s dealings with the rich young ruler, should literally read, “...and in the age to come age-lasting life,” or, “...and in the age to come life for that age.” “Eternal life,” as previously stated, is NOT even in view.

There is NO such thing as inheriting “eternal life” in the “age to come [or ‘world to come’ as some translations erroneously read].”

Eternal life is NOT inherited; it is a free gift, and it is a present possession rather than a future hope. The possession of eternal life (present) and coming into possession of an inheritance (future) — both spoken of numerous times in Scripture — are two different things entirely.

That which is in view in Mark 10:17-30 is an inheritance with Christ as co-heir in the 1000-year kingdom during the coming age.

But that which needs to be seen here is the fact that there is a reference to the same two ages referred to in Matt. 12:32.

The coming age, in Mark 10:30, is specifically identified as *the Messianic Era*.

And, the present age, in existence at a time preceding Calvary in Matt. 12:32, lasts UNTIL *the Messianic Era*.

Looking Back in Time

Now, with that in mind, note several Scriptures which show that the age in existence at a time prior to Calvary — an age which extends forward to the Messianic Era (extends forward to the end of Man's Day, to the Lord's Day) — also extends back to the very beginning of Man's Day.

That is, comparing several other references with Matt. 12:32 and Mark 10:17, 30, it can unquestionably be shown that *ONE age* covers the whole of Man's Day.

“As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world [‘the age’] began” (Luke 1:70).

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world [‘the age’]” (Acts 15:18).

The word “prophet” (Luke 1:70; *cf.* Acts 3:21) is used in Scripture in a somewhat broader sense than it is usually thought of today. The word appears quite often (about 150 times in the N.T.) and is used as a title given to the person whom the Lord had chosen to communicate — “announce,” “declare” — His message to the people.

And the message need not necessarily be prophetic *per se* for the title “prophet” to be used of the messenger. This title is used referring to those chosen at different times to declare the will and purpose of God through either a written revelation or a verbal expression.

It is used of individuals preceding the existence of the nation of Israel (Jude 14), of individuals in Israel (Matt. 23:37; Luke 24:27), of individuals in the first century Church prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture (I Cor. 12:28; 13:9, 10; Eph. 4:11), and of individuals in Israel once again yet future (Joel 2:27, 28; Rev. 11:3, 10).

In this respect, all of those chosen to write portions of the Word of God, beginning with Moses and ending with John, could be called “prophets.” And others, such as Enoch or Noah who communicated the message of God to the people of their day — though they were not chosen to write particular sections of

Scripture — could also be looked upon after this same fashion (cf. II Peter 2:5; Jude 14).

In fact, this word, in its strict Scriptural usage, could be used referring to certain individuals all the way back to and including Adam himself.

The age in which Jesus lived at the time of His earthly ministry is, thus, *NOT ONLY* seen in Scripture extending forward to the beginning of the Messianic Era *BUT* it is also seen extending back to the beginning of man's existence on the earth.

And understanding the way *aion* (age) is used in Luke 1:70 and Acts 15:18 (cf. John 9:32; Acts 3:21), a person can arrive at *ONLY one conclusion*. The present age, looking back in time, covers the entire period of the "prophets," which, of necessity, would have to include *NOT ONLY* Enoch (who "prophesied" over 1,500 years prior to the appearance of Moses [Jude 14]), *BUT* also Adam.

The Complete Picture

God knew all of His works which would transpire within the framework of the ages at the time of man's creation (Acts 15:18).

And this was something known at a prior time when He designed and made the ages with the thought in mind that His Son would, in the climactic age of the sequence of ages in view, *inherit* "all things" (Heb. 1:2). And God — being both Omniscient and the Architect of the ages — in order to make His will known and reveal events transpiring during the ages, simply "spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets [revealing His plans and purposes]," *beginning with Adam*.

Accordingly, at least *three ages* in relation to the present heavens and earth can be seen in Scripture.

At least one age (and there may have been more than one) existed between the creation of the heavens and the earth in Gen. 1:1 and the beginning of the restoration of the ruined creation in Gen. 1:2b. Then another age began at that point, which covers the next 6,000 years. And, to bring the first sequence of ages to a close, the climactic age of the ages will be ushered in at the completion of the 6,000 years, an age which will cover the next 1,000 years.

Then, at the end of the 1,000-year Messianic Era, the present heavens and earth (heavens associated with the earth, not the universe as a whole) will be destroyed and be replaced with a new heavens and a new earth; and a new age will begin (which will be the first in an apparent new sequence of ages).

How long that new age will last is unrevealed. But it will have a beginning point and an ending point.

And following that age will be another age, and then another, and then another, forming an unending God-designed and arranged sequence of ages, comprising eternity.

DISPENSATIONS

AS DISTINGUISHED FROM "AGES"

"Dispensations" is the term used in Scripture to show distinctions in God's dealings with different groups of mankind during Man's Day and the following Messianic Era.

The term "dispensations" though is NOT synonymous with ages. One age covers the whole of Man's Day, and another age covers the succeeding Messianic Era; but, there are more than two dispensations within the scope of these two ages.

The word "dispensation" is the translation of the Greek word, *oikonomia*. A cognate form of the word is *oikonomos*, which is made up of two words — *oikos* (house) and *nemo* (to manage).

Thus, *oikonomos* has to do with *the management of a house* — a central person placed in charge, with others holding responsible positions in the house under this person. And *oikonomia* (the word used for "dispensation") carries the same basic meaning.

Oikonomia has been translated "stewardship" in three instances in the New Testament (Luke 16:2-4, KJV); and the word actually only appears six other times, translated "dispensation" (KJV) four of the six times (I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; I Tim. 1:4).

"Stewardship" has to do with *household management*.

Christians are stewards in this respect since they are members of a household, have been placed in charge of a portion of the Owner's goods, and are expected to manage those goods within

the household (under the leadership of the Holy Spirit) after such a fashion that there will be an increase (*cf.* Matt. 25:14ff; Luke 19:12ff).

Thus, “a dispensation” simply has to do with the management of the Lord’s household affairs through those whom He has placed in His house (stewards).

And when there is a *stewardship* change within God’s dealing with mankind, there is, correspondingly, a change in the *dispensation*. This would have to be the case, for *stewardship* and *dispensation* are synonymous in this respect.

Within the scope of the 7,000 years set forth through that foreshadowed by the seven days in Gen. 1:2b-2:3, there are at least four different dispensations.

There is a present dispensation (during which God is dealing with Christians), there were at least two past dispensations (one in which God dealt with Israel, and the other in which He dealt with mankind at large prior to His dealings with Israel [through a lineage in the loins of Abraham]), and there is a future dispensation (the Messianic Era).

Then, the period prior to the creation of Adam in which Satan ruled over the earth apart from a successor being present could probably be called a dispensation in the strict sense of the word (for a stewardship did exist, one in which Satan rebelled against the Lord within his assigned position and trust). And on the other side of the 7,000 years a similar situation will exist with respect to the thought of dispensations, with man, at that time, occupying positions in God’s government of the universe.

However, time and events both before and after the 7,000 years are spoken of in Scripture *ONLY* to an extent which will allow man to properly understand time and events during the 7,000 years. Scripture deals with the latter almost exclusively, having very little to say about the former.

Thus, to speak of dispensations outside the framework of the 7,000 years is doing little more than surmising. There is very little revelation to work with in this respect, and the subject has been mentioned only to carry some continuity of thought from the past age or ages into the 7,000 years, and then from the 7,000 years into the future ages.

The Normal Dispensational Outlook

When referring to dispensations, *The Scofield Reference Bible* is usually looked to more than any other source, for its references follow, to a large extent, a dispensational framework set up in different places in the footnotes.

And this is the same dispensational framework which is usually taught in Bible colleges and seminaries when viewing Scripture after a dispensational fashion.

Footnotes in *The Scofield Reference Bible* call attention to seven dispensations:

- 1) *Innocence*, from the creation to the fall.
- 2) *Conscience*, from the fall to the Flood.
- 3) *Human Government*, from the Flood to the call of Abraham.
- 4) *Promise*, from the call of Abraham to the giving of the Law at Sinai under Moses.
- 5) *Law*, from Sinai to Calvary.
- 6) *Grace*, from Calvary to the Kingdom.
- 7) *Kingdom*, the 1000-year Messianic Era.

The preceding though, in *The Scofield Reference Bible*, is based on an incorrect understanding of what constitutes a dispensation.

In this reference Bible, a dispensation is defined as “a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God” (footnote for heading of Gen. 1:28ff).

Then, relative to “the dispensation of the fulness of times” in Eph. 1:10, a footnote in the *The Scofield Reference Bible* states, “This, the seventh and last of the ordered ages which condition human life on the earth...”

(The preceding quotations were taken from *The Scofield Reference Bible* of 1909, the original edition.

The same definition of a dispensation was retained by the editors in *The New Scofield Reference Bible* of 1967, the updated edition; but the footnote commenting on “the dispensation of the fulness of times” in Eph. 1:10 was deleted in the later edition.)

Thus, in both editions of *The Scofield Reference Bible*, there is an incorrect definition of a dispensation. And in the original edition, in the footnote commenting on Eph. 1:10, “dispensation” and “age” are looked upon as synonymous, *i.e.*, the seven dispensations are set forth as seven ages.

This is probably the point to which a high percentage of the existing confusion concerning both dispensations and ages can be traced, for footnotes in *The Scofield Reference Bible*, rather than Scripture itself, have established the mold for much of the dispensational thought in Christendom today.

And this is also probably why the present dispensation is, more often than not, erroneously called “the Church Age” by many Christians.

The Scriptural Divisions

Using the strict definition of the Greek word *oikonomia* (dispensation), Scripture will logically divide itself into four dispensations during the 7,000 years extending from the creation of Adam to the end of the Messianic Kingdom.

In I Cor. 10:32, mankind is divided into three groups, and God’s dealings with these three groups — separately during Man’s Day, and together during the coming Messianic Era — establish *the only* Biblical, dispensational scheme of the matter.

“Give none offence [‘do not be offensive,’ or ‘do not provide a cause for stumbling’], neither to *the Jews*, nor to *the Gentiles*, nor to *the Church of God*.”

God deals with mankind in cycles of time.

There were, for example, 7-year, 70-year (7X10), and 490-year (7X7X10) cycles in which He dealt with Israel (Ex. 31:13-17; Jer. 25:11, 12; Dan. 9:2, 24-27), and these cycles occurred within a larger 2,000-year cycle in which He dealt (and will deal) with the nation (seven years yet remain — the seven years comprising the coming Tribulation, Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week — to complete not only a final 490-year cycle but the full 2,000-year cycle).

There are actually three of these 2,000-year cycles (though only one pertains to Israel); and the three 2,000-year cycles, comprising the whole of Man's Day — covering God's dealings with the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God (His dealings with each occurring separately within one of the 2,000-year cycles) — is followed by the last cycle of time, lasting 1,000 years.

This will be the 1,000-year Messianic Era in which God will deal with the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God together at the same time. And all of this has been foreshadowed by the seven days which God placed at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in Gen. 1:2b-2:3.

That would be to say, God, throughout the 6,000 years comprising Man's Day, deals with the three divisions of mankind on an equal-time basis — for 2,000 years each.

Then, following the 6,000 years, He will continue His dealings with these three divisions on an equal-time basis. He will deal with all three together, at the same time, for 1,000 years. And these divisions (*three* divisions of mankind, dealt with during *four* time periods) form the dispensational divisions *which Scripture itself provides*.

This is how four dispensations logically fit into the 7,000-years, foreshadowed at the beginning, in Gen. 1:2b-2:3.

God began His actions after this fashion through dealing with mankind at large (through those in the loins of Abraham) — through what would be considered His 2000-year dealings with the Gentiles — though during the first 2,000 years of human history there was, in the strict sense of the word, no such thing as Gentiles.

"A Gentile" in Scripture is simply *someone who is NOT a Jew (or today, when the expression "in Christ" is used, NOT a Christian as well [Gal. 3:28])*; and prior to the call of Abraham and the separate creation which emanated from his seed through Isaac and Jacob (Isa. 43:1), *a division within mankind of this nature did not, it could not, exist*.

However, God's dealings with mankind in general during the first 2,000 years of human history was, in the main, with those who would later be looked upon as Gentiles. And His dealings with this division of mankind *MUST either be placed in the first 2,000-year period OR NOT be placed at all*.

Or, to turn that around, the first 2,000-year period *MUST* either relate to the Gentiles OR NOT relate to any one of the three divisions of mankind.

Then God dealt another 2,000 years (seven years yet remain) with those called Jews, or Hebrews (Abraham was not a “Jew” [a name derived from Judah], but he was the first person in Scripture called a “Hebrew,” with his descendants being called “Hebrews” [a name thought to mean “the one who crossed over,” *i.e.*, crossed over the Euphrates en route to the land to which he had been called, with his descendants looked upon as having crossed over with him, in his loins — Gen. 14:13; 40:15; 43:32; Ex. 2:11; Joshua 24:2, 3]).

After that, which brings us into the present 2,000 years, God is dealing with a *new creation* “in Christ” — with Christians — called into existence for a specific, revealed purpose.

And we are today living very near the end of the present two millenniums, which would also place man (Jew, Gentile, and Christian) very near the end of the entire triad of three 2,000-year periods.

That which will end the 6,000 years though, as previously shown, is *NOT* the completion of the present 2,000-year period *BUT* the completion of the previous 2,000-year period (for seven years yet remain to complete that period, which will occur after the completion of the present period).

This previous 2,000-year period will be completed through the fulfillment of Daniel’s full Seventy Weeks. One Week — the Seventieth Week — remains, which comprises the coming seven-year Tribulation.

THEN, and ONLY THEN, will God deal with all three divisions of mankind together, at the same time. And He will, at that time, deal with these three divisions after this fashion for 1,000 years, completing the full 7,000 years.

Thus, Scripture begins with a 2,000-year dispensation having to do with God dealing with the Gentiles; it continues with another 2,000-year dispensation having to do with God dealings with the Jews; it continues with another 2,000-year dispensation having to do with God dealings with Christians; and it concludes the full 7,000 years with a 1,000-year dispensation in which God will deal with all three groups of mankind together at the same time.

This is the manner in which Scripture naturally divides itself in a dispensational respect, which is in perfect keeping with the framework of time foreshadowed by the six and seven days opening the Book of Genesis.

And following these natural divisions is really the best way to divide the whole of Scripture to show an overall dispensational picture which can be easily understood:

- 1) From Adam to Abraham (2,000 years).
- 2) From Abraham to Calvary, plus the future seven-year Tribulation (2,000 years).
- 3) From Calvary to the Tribulation (2,000 years).
- 4) Then 1,000 years toward which everything will have moved since God, in the beginning, “made the worlds [‘the ages’]” (Heb. 1:2).

(For a breakdown of different set times and periods within the dispensations, refer to the author’s book, *We Are Almost There.*)

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