

A Life to Overcome

**An In-Depth Study Regarding God's Purpose For Man
And How One Can Overcome His Life**

A Life to Overcome

© Copyright 2013 by Laura L. Whitley

First Printing, August 2013

Published by *Kingdom Ministries*

Printed in the United States

Cover photograph of Pacific Ocean in Panama: taken by Noble Whitley

A Life to Overcome

**An In-Depth Study Regarding God's Purpose For Man
And How One Can Overcome His Life**

by
Laura L. Whitley

2013

Dedication

To my Father and Lord Jesus Christ, in whom I put my trust and hope, looking forward to His glorious return and Millennial Kingdom.

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

(Revelation 3:21)

A LIFE TO OVERCOME

Contents

Foreword		
Prologue		1
Chapter 1	God's Purpose for Man	13
Chapter 2	Full Scope of Salvation	29
Chapter 3	Judgment Seat of Christ	49
	Introduction	49
	Part 1 Fear of the Lord	59
	Part 2 Rewards or Loss/Prologue	67
	Part 3 Bride of Christ	101
Chapter 4	Timeline of God's Redemptive Plan	113
	Introduction	113
	Part 1 Man's Day: 6,000 Years	125
	Part 2 Day of the Lord: Messianic Era /Prologue	137
	Part 3 Eternal Ages/Prologue	149
	Part 4 What Time is it?	155
Chapter 5	Characteristics of an Overcomer	167
	Introduction	167
	Part 1 Old Testament Examples	175
	Section 1 Genesis to Ruth	175
	Section 2 David to Ecclesiastes	238
	Section 3 Song of Solomon to Malachi	281
	Part 2 The Beatitudes	318
	Part 3 Matthew Parables	338
	Part 4 New Testament Epistles	384
	Introduction	384
	Section 1 Romans to Ephesians	386
	Section 2 Philippians to Timothy	431
	Section 3 Titus to Jude	457
	Part 5 Battling the Three Enemies of God	564
	Part 6 Pathway to the Kingdom	586
	Part 7 Seven Churches in Revelation	604

Chapter 6	Revelation of Jesus Christ – Declaring the End	640
Chapter 7	Life Transformation	715
	Introduction	715
	Part 1 Prayer: Our Connection with God	721
	Part 2 Hearers of the Word	729
	Part 3 Doers of the Word	741
	Part 4 God’s Daily Principles to Live By	751
Chapter 8	Spiritual Hosts of Wickedness	761
Chapter 9	Conclusion: Questions and Answers	784
Chapter 10	Notes from the Author	799
	Join the Kingdom Poem	809
	Recommended Books, Websites and Media	812
	Charts, Diagrams and Illustrations:	
	Illustration of the Rapture/Judgment Seat	3
	Illustration of Outer Darkness	6
	Illustration of the Bride of Christ	11
	Three-Part Salvation Diagram	48
	Illustration of 24 Elders and Crown	69
	Illustration of The Great Tribulation	72
	Illustration of Christ’s Return	79
	Illustration of Battle of Armageddon	79
	Judgment Seat of Christ Diagram	111
	Restoration Week Chart	131
	History of Man Chart	135
	Illustration of Kingdom of Heaven	138
	Illustration of 1000 Year Reign of Christ	138
	Illustration of the Lake of Fire	142
	Illustration of the New Jerusalem	154
	Daniel’s Seventy Week Prophecy Diagram	165
	Outline of God’s Plans	166
	Comparison Chart of Daniel’s Visions	307
	Map of Ancient Babylonian Empire	317
	Babylon’s Future Condition	695
	Babylon’s Identity	696
	Babylon’s Final Destruction	697
	Past and Future Chart	698
	Charting the End Times, 7 Jewish Feasts	712 -714

A Life to Overcome

Foreword

This book was written to reveal the truths surrounding the Christian's future in the coming age. If you have a strong desire to know the Lord and to know your purpose in this life as well as the next, this book is for you. It provides a monumental message, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that I felt compelled to share. This message is unspoken in Christendom today, leaving Christians oblivious to their purpose in Christ. Therefore, the truths revealed in this book will be "*shocking*" to some, and hopefully will bring them to a realization of their calling.

Unlike the teachings of the 20th century Church, salvation by grace is not the end of the Christian race, but only the beginning. The end will occur when this age comes to a close and all Christians find themselves facing the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ in the heavens. This is where the actions or works of all believers will be judged. Therefore, it would profit you to know how to overcome your present life and fulfill God's purpose for you. *A life to overcome* means a life or soul to win; to have victory over. Another expression used is "*soul winning*." Soul winning is *winning one's life*. We are currently running a race to obtain victory of our soul.

I challenge you to not just read what is written, but to study the truths presented alongside with an open Bible. But before you do this, I ask you to pray that the Lord provides you with the gift of understanding and of the full-knowledge (Greek: '*epignosis*') of His Word. To aid the reader in the quest for truth, I chose to use the New King James Version of the Bible in this writing as well as Strong's exhaustive concordance for Hebrew and Greek definitions. I also use the word "man" in this book along with the appropriate pronouns that follow it, in the generic sense of the term, to mean the human race in its most inclusive sense.

I begin the book with a story, to give the reader a picture in their mind of what it will be like when the end comes. The actual events of the Lord's Day for the Church are revealed in the Book of **Revelation**. In my writing, you will find answers to numerous Scriptures that were not fully understood in the past. My goal for this book is to present the entire Bible

as it relates to the central message — Christ and His future kingdom. My second goal is to beseech you to walk worthy of the Lord and overcome your soul-life in this age so that you may take part in Christ's coming kingdom in the age to come. God speed my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Laura L. Whitley

2013

A LIFE TO OVERCOME

PROLOGUE

It is declared:

"Behold, He is coming with clouds and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen!"

Just then Michael, the archangel, excitedly replies,

"The trumpet blows! It is time! The kingdom of heaven is ready!"

After six thousand years, the long and difficult course of human history has unfolded. This occurrence has always been God's perfect plan of redemption since the fall of man --- that for 6,000 years, He would prepare a race of king-priests who would fulfill the final destiny of man's purpose --- to rule and reign with Christ Jesus. The Truth is finally revealed and Satan's lie exposed. It is now time for the final accounting of all believers in heaven. For the next seven years, those left behind on earth will go through the greatest Tribulation of all time, such as never before. And then the one thousand year reign of Christ will begin.

"We have been preparing for this moment for thousands of years,"

says one of the seven angels.

"We have constructed the great city according to the Messiah's instructions."

"And what a magnificent city it is!"

says Michael.

"The King Himself specified every detail for the arrival of His bride. What joy He has for those servants who will qualify to reign with Him!"

Suddenly there is a sound that reaches from one end of the world to the other, like the rush of a great wind. The graves open and millions of bodies rise from the dead, all those who were in Christ, to meet the Lord in the air. Then, in a twinkling of an eye, millions of living believers disappear from the face of the earth and appear in the sky following the raised bodies to meet the Lord in the air. The hour has come for all believers to stand before the Judge, at the Judgment seat of Christ, to be tested on all of their works, whether good or bad. The test of works will determine where they will be placed in heaven, either inside the kingdom with Christ or outside the kingdom without Christ for one thousand years. Time has run out and there is no more room for repentance.

No going back.....it's too late.

Michael gazes at the multitudes of people surrounding the city square. The angels reflect brilliant lights, shining in all directions as they play beautiful music and sing,

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Then a loud voice speaks, as the sound of a trumpet, of One clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair is white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire. His feet is like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. He has on His right hand side a multitude of angels and His countenance is like the sun shining in its strength. And when anyone sees Him, there is much fear, and many fall to the floor as if dead.

The court is seated and books are opened. The Judge is ready to commence, for the hour of judgment has come. One by one the vast



RAPTURE of the Church (above) to the
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST (below)



multitudes are summoned to the Judge's throne. As a person steps up to the platform to be judged, no one except that person and Christ can hear the conversation. How amazing it is to be standing before the King! Yet, how fearful it must be to be judged before the Son of God! One's entire past life on earth will be revealed, including every secret thing. The fire will test everyone's work and then each will receive his verdict.

A man walks up before the Christ. His life had been wasted, centered on the lusts of the flesh and of the world. He had become a Christian at the early age of thirty, but never matured in Christ nor followed the path of righteousness. He had been led by the world and his flesh, trying to become rich and spending the rest of his time in leisure and entertainment. His friends were the same, except one, who invited him often to Bible study and to serve God. But he always refused his invitation. The world of discipleship seemed too difficult and he was not willing to sacrifice his enjoyment of life. He had attended the Church regularly with his wife and family, but his heart was never focused on God. Instead of laying up treasures in heaven, he had chosen to lay up treasures on earth. Bible study was boring, and his prayer life was nonexistent.

"Come closer, servant of Mine,"

thunders the voice from the throne. His face brilliantly shines like the sun and His eyes like a flame of fire, with a serious look and not a glimpse of a smile.

"Yes Lord, I...I..."

The man is speechless. All his excuses to postpone becoming committed to Christ no longer mattered. It is too late now. He reminisces about all the opportunities he had in his life to be a good servant, but chose not to. The world always seemed more attractive. He thought of God's gifts to him throughout his lifetime, a spiritual Christian wife who truly modeled the Christian walk and taught their children the Word of God. He never joined with his family in desiring a true spiritual relationship with Christ. He was a Christian, but he did not know or love God.

"Servant of Mine,"

thunders the King, interrupting his thoughts,

“I warned you often that there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; nothing hidden that will not be known. I know your works and I know your heart. You chose not to heed My call, you did not love Me with all your heart, soul and mind, and you chose not to confess your sins, even though I loved you and died for you. You chose not to watch for Me, therefore I have come upon you now as a thief and there is no room for repentance. Through the test of fire, I have not found your works perfect before God.”

"Lord, I am so sorry!"

he cries, realizing the consequence he would now have to face.

Lifting His head upward, Christ Jesus then says,

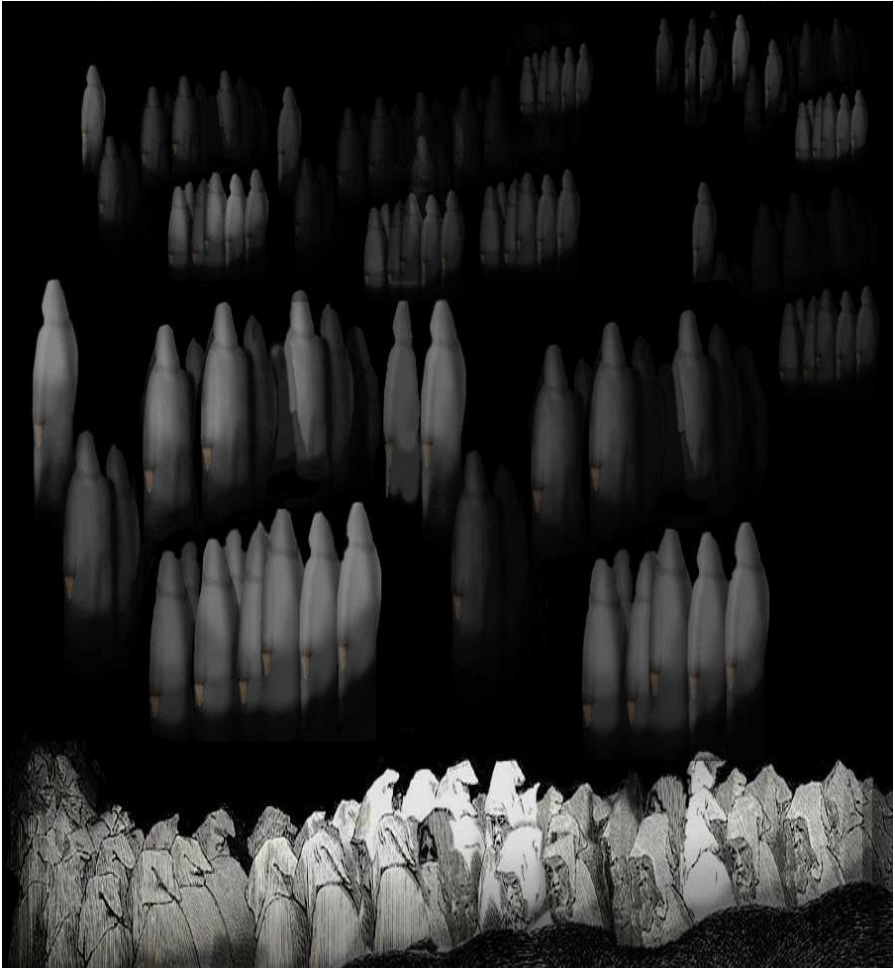
"Father, I bring this servant of Mine before You. He has denied Me by his life on earth, and now I deny him before You. He will not enter the kingdom of heaven as one of my servant king-priests. He has lost his inheritance!"

Then, with a powerful voice that echoes loudly in the heavenly throne room, the King rebukes the unfaithful servant,

"Depart from Me, you wicked and lazy servant!"

"Please N-o-o-o-o!"

he screams and falls on his knees. But the angels come, bind him hands and feet, and cast him into outer darkness, where he begins to weep and gnash his teeth in utter regret. Then the angels enter back in and lock the gates.



Outer Darkness

(Outer Darkness is a region outside the light of the heavenly kingdom and is reserved for non-overcomers [Christians] found unworthy to enter the kingdom; they will have lost their soul and their inheritance for 1000 years)

The next man whose name is Jacob is summoned before the Judgment seat. His legs tremble before the King and his eyes display tears of fear, joy and amazement.

"Come, servant of Mine,"

says the King, who is now gleaming with delight and with a voice of compassion. With fear and a hopeful expectation, the humble man gets up and walks closer to the throne.

"My God! How *great* You are! Praise and honor and glory to you Lord. I love you with all my heart!"

Jacob had been a faithful steward of the Word for forty years. His passion and delight in life was in serving God. He took God's Word very seriously and committed his life to it, allowing the Spirit to use him in ways to glorify Him and spread His Word. God used Jacob as a powerful witness to His plans and purposes. He suffered greatly throughout his life with poverty, sickness and attacks from Satan. But he kept the faith and persevered. His humble and holy countenance reflected his Christian walk, and his sufferings made him even stronger in the faith.

Because Jacob was diligent to seek the truth of His Word, God gave him knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom. By faith, he ran the race with strength all of his life, having the hope of His return and of entering His rest. He devoted his ministry in spreading the kingdom message, speaking of Christ's imminent return.

And once, when an unfaithful Christian was provoked by Jacob's trials, pains and suffering in order to doubt the gospel of the kingdom, Jacob joyfully responded,

"Could it be that God allowed all of these trials and tribulations so that I would have the privilege of telling you and others that by faith in God we are able to deal with any tragedy, knowing that He is with us and will reward us?"

Yet Christians rejected his message of Jesus' return and the kingdom to come. Rather, they believed the false teachers because they were considered great seminary scholars who taught that the kingdom is already

here. But Jacob responded, "If you open your ears and eyes to God's Word and not man's word, then the truth will set you free. Lay aside all teachings from man and start anew from the Spirit of truth." Truly, Jacob was an overcomer.

And as he stands at a distance before his Judge, he suddenly falls on his knees as if dead.

Once again the Judge summons Jacob,

"Do not be afraid. Come here, servant of Mine."

Jacob walks up to the throne. He is short of breath and his legs are weak, overwhelmed by the presence of the Lord.

"Jacob,"

says the Judge,

"I know your heart and I know your works. You bring me delight for fulfilling the purpose I have designed for your life. You have been faithful in a few things. I will now make you ruler over many."

The Judge continues,

"Thank you for giving me food and drink when I needed it."

Jacob replies,

"But Lord, when did I ever give you food and drink?"

The Judge answers,

"Do you remember when you ministered the milk and meat of My Word to the poor in spirit in the prisons? Do you remember when you gave your tithing to your fellow ministries and churches?

Do you remember all those people, young and old, especially the widows, whom you gave wise counsel and love, attending to their needs? Do you remember ministering to the sick and to the poor? You let your light so shine before men that they saw your good works, and glorified your Father in heaven. You have given meat in due season over My household, my faithful and wise servant.

Jacob's life, now put to the test, produces quiet yet exuberant joyfulness that Christ is pleased with him.

Jacob replies,

"Thank you, Lord, but I have only done my duty as Your servant."

Then the Judge proclaims,

"Because you have honored Me on earth, I will honor you in heaven. Your new name will be 'Brave Heart' and I will give you a white stone with this new name written on it that no one except you will know. You have been brave in faith in the midst of personal difficulty. You have fought a good fight. You have kept the faith. You have finished your course. You have longed for My return. Today, you have earned the crown of righteousness, the crown of life and the crown of rejoicing. The crown of righteousness will be given to you because you have kept the faith, the crown of life will be given because you have endured temptation, and the crown of rejoicing will be given because you eagerly hoped for My return. Enter into My rest and into the kingdom of the heavens."

With joy in His eyes the King announces to His faithful servant,

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord. You will now inherit the kingdom."

Meanwhile, many left behind on earth are terror-stricken as their loved ones vanish before their eyes. Some blame the occurrence on space aliens. Others claim mother-nature as the culprit. Still others blame the incident on a world-wide attack from radicals. Yet, in the midst of world chaos, many do not realize that this was the rapture of the Church and that Jesus Christ had returned. But soon every created being that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them will be heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Soon after the seven year tribulation has come to a close, Christ will return with His angels and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. It will be then that all of the tribes of Israel will mourn because of Him. And every individual on earth will at some point in time have to face the Lord's judgment.

Two of the angels walk towards Jacob and escort him into the gates of the kingdom to await the wedding ceremony, the marriage feast of the Lamb. His spiritual body has become enswathed in glory, incorruptible and immortal. His garments are white as snow, reflecting purity and righteousness. What a glorious day it is for Jacob! The Day of the Lord has come!

(The above presentation will be continued in Chapter 3)



BRIDE OF CHRIST

(The Bride of Christ is made up of overcomers [Christians] found worthy to rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years)

What if we are raptured today? Would we be prepared to face our Lord Jesus Christ? Would we be prepared to show our good works and faithful stewardship before Him at His judgment seat?

It is evident in the Scriptures that we do not have much time before the Son of God returns for His bride. The reenactment just given of the rapture and Judgment seat of Christ is a similar picture of what will soon take place. If we are not prepared, we will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven for one thousand years. Satan has succeeded in twisting and hiding the truth of Christ's return and the coming kingdom since the fall of man. The manner in which he has accomplished this deception within the Church was by placing false teachers to corrupt the Word. Satan's goal is to derail the lives of all Christians. And his purpose for doing this is because he realizes his end is near and he does not want to surrender his rule over the earth.

Regardless, the Scriptures confirm that each of us will one day face an accounting for the stewardship with which we have been entrusted. For those who have been faithful to their Lord throughout life, it will be a day of rejoicing and of reward. However, a different fate awaits those Christians who have failed to persevere, who have not remained faithful to their Lord and Savior. There can be no greater tragedy than to hear the words, "*too late.*" They will have lost their inheritance and will not be able enter the kingdom of heaven or rule and reign with Christ Jesus.

I challenge you today, whether you are a babe in Christ or a minister of the Word, to open up your heart to what the writer is about to disclose. The purpose of our journey is to prepare us for what is to come, and we can only do this by our own will and choice. Let us begin with the foundation, which is Jesus Christ, and allow the Spirit to guide us into all Truth. God has a purpose for you, which is why He gave His Son to die for you.

Would you like to know what God's purpose is for you?

CHAPTER ONE

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MAN

God created man for a purpose. Man was placed on earth for a reason. What is our purpose? Why are we here?

It was God's plan from the beginning to give man, whom He created in His image and likeness, *dominion* over the earth, to rule and reign with Him.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion.....over all the earth...."

(Genesis 1:26)

Before the foundation of the world and before man was ever created, God's purpose for man was to rule and reign with Christ from the kingdom of the heavens over the earth. Sometime in eternity past, all things were planned and created through God's Son and for God's Son.

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)

The foundation and the arrangement of Scripture is laid in **Genesis 1:1-2:3**,

The heavens and the earth were created (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18), the material creation was ruined because of Satan's sin (Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:13-19), God restored the ruined creation in six days, and He rested on the seventh day (Genesis 1:3-2:3).

Man was created (Genesis 1:26), man fell into a state of ruin because of sin (Genesis 3:6), God is presently taking six days [6,000 years] to restore man, and God will rest on the seventh day (the seventh 1,000-year period [Exodus 20:9-11; 2 Peter 3:5-9]).

The restoration of man, patterned after the restoration of the material creation, is the scope of all Scripture. The entirety of Scripture is about that which is initially introduced and originated in an unchangeable manner in the opening thirty-four verses of **Genesis (1:1-2:3)**. The entirety of Scripture is about the creation of man, his ruin, his restoration over a six-day period (over a 6,000-year period), followed by a seventh day of rest (a seventh 1,000-year period — the future Sabbath Rest [**Genesis: 2:1-3; Hebrews 4:1, 9, 11**], the Messianic Era.

The key to understanding the Word of God begins with understanding this proper foundation set in the beginning of **Genesis**, where God began. If one can understand that the Word is about "redemption and regality" and is fashioned around the same pattern of: 1) Creation 2) Ruin 3) Restoration 4) Rest, then he can build upon the rest of the Scriptures correctly. This arrangement is how God began His revelation to man. God took six days to restore the ruined material creation (because of Satan's sin).

In like pattern, God is presently taking six days (6,000 years) to restore man (because of man's sin). And then, in accord with the pattern established in the beginning, there will be a seventh day (1,000 years) which will be a day of rest. This "*Rest*" is the Sabbath Day, the Day of the Lord, the Millennial Kingdom to come. *All* of the rest of the Scriptures give further commentary and points to this very Day, the seventh Day. And once an individual can perceive this truth, he will also be able to understand the spiritual lessons throughout the entirety of Scripture, and he will be able to see that the central Person in Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ, from the beginning to the end.

God's purpose for man (to rule and reign on the Seventh Day) is revealed throughout the entire Word of God. In the Old Testament, it was portrayed in types (figures, patterns, examples), and it was first offered to the Jews, God's chosen people. A "*type*" is a divine illustration of some truth which is foreshadowed. In the New Testament, it was revealed in the Gospels, in and through the Parables, in the Epistles and in the Book of **Revelation**.

Because of man's fall into sin, he failed to take on a position of rulership. He now had to labor in the field to prove his worthiness. Therefore, Satan continued to have rulership over the earth and will hold this position until a future time when he is taken down. Lucifer, the beautifully created

angel known as Satan, who was given rule over the original creation, continued to hold the scepter of rulership, even in his fallen condition (the first to bring sin into the world by rebelling against God), even to this present day. Satan's rebellion concerned rulership (ascending above God—**Isaiah 14:13**) and as a result of this rebellion, the material creation of **Genesis 1:1** under the rule of Satan, became ruined.

*The earth was [“became” or “to be”--from the Hebrew word “hayah,” Strong’s #H1961] without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. (**Genesis 1:2**)*

It is at this point in time that God spends six days restoring the ruined material creation, so as to establish it in preparation for an entirely new group of rulers who would be created for that specific purpose. And within His plans for man to rule, He made man a little lower than the angels so that he must prove himself worthy to replace the incumbent ruler, Satan. For man to attain the position for which he was created, to be elevated above the angels, and to rule and reign with Christ, he would have to parallel that which is seen in the six days of restoration (six thousand years of work) followed by a seventh day of rest (the 7th one-thousand year period, which will be the Millennial Kingdom). Each day for God is equivalent to a thousand years for man, as we see in **2 Peter 3:8**:

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The day that man sinned in the Garden of Eden, his complete being—spirit, soul, and body — became in a fallen state, a state of death. This is when God began his redemptive work in dealing with that death. This was the reason for Christ's death. In order to effect the Father's plans and purposes in respect of rulership, Christ had to die in order to pay the price required by man's rebellion. All of these events — Satan's rebellion, the creation of man, the fall of man, Christ's death and resurrection, and the need for redemption are all part of the process to bring about the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes for the ages, all of which points to the 7th day, the Millennial Kingdom (1000 year reign of Christ) – the Messianic Era.

However, Satan will do everything in his power to keep his position of rulership. With one-third of the fallen angels who left with him, he is out deceiving those who threaten him most — the Church. Since Pentecost, he has succeeded in distracting the attention of Christians from the truth of the Word by and through the formation of different man-made religions and Church programs. He has been successful in blinding them from understanding the truth by twisting, falsifying, or omitting part of the Word of God; and also, by encouraging the ungodly imposition of self-generated religious acts performed by many of today's churches and denominations, none of which have any foundation in God's Word. Satan does this to disqualify those who compose the Church from obtaining rulership one day.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

Satan's work, performed through the religious leaders of the past, was passed down throughout the generations in order to deceive the Church from knowing the mystery of the kingdom, which is the Church being offered the inheritance (an action that applies *only* to family members ["first-born sons"]) into the kingdom of the heavens.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Today, Churches have completely eliminated the purpose of their creation — to rule and reign with Christ. They simply omit Scripture concerning Christ's second return for His Church, the Judgment seat of Christ, and the Millennial Kingdom. Some Churches teach that the Kingdom of God is not a literal kingdom, using the verse in **Luke 17:20, 21**:

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

During this time, Jesus was offering the kingdom of the heavens to the nation of Israel, and He presented Himself as their Messiah while in their midst [presence]. The words “*within you*” may also be translated “*in your midst*.” Thus, Jesus was referring to Himself. One day in the near future, Jesus will rule over all, and He will share that rule with His people in His literal kingdom. And all will know when He has returned:

“For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His Day.” (Luke 17:24)

Within His redemptive work, God brought forth three first-born Sons — Christ, Israel and the Church — to fulfill His purpose of redeeming man to a future position of rulership. And in and through Christ (the Gentiles being grafted in with the Jews to make up the Church), Christians have the rights to the inheritance, as we see in **Galatians 3:29**:

And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Our position “in Christ” makes us part of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and therefore partakers of the promises that were first given to

them. However, we must meet certain conditions in order to qualify for the future inheritance, as God's firstborn sons and as the bride of Christ. Since Pentecost, God has been searching for a bride for His Son who will be taken out of the body of Christ (the Church), and who will qualify as co-heirs with Christ to rule and reign with Him in the kingdom of the heavens. Christ will return soon. When that time comes will you, as you stand before Him, be prepared?

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the kingdom of heaven [lit. kingdom of the heavens], but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Many will say to Me in that day [Day of the Lord], ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name?’

And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:21-23)

Jesus is speaking to Christians as only they call Christ by the name “Lord.” The Greek word for “Christian” is *Christianos* (Strong's #G5546) and means “a follower of Christ” [Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16]. Note that “heaven” refers to the invisible heavens connected with the earth from which rulership takes place. When “heaven” is used in Scripture, it is used in the plural sense and can be translated, “in the heavens.” Heaven means “all above” and the expression, kingdom of heaven [lit. “kingdom of the heavens”] means “a particular region in the heavens” where God reigns. Who will enter the kingdom of the heavens? It is “*He who does the will of my Father in heaven,*” says Jesus Christ.

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. (1 John 2:3-5)

How can we know and do the will of God? God left Christians with the most important source ever written — the Holy Bible, which is His Word, and is alive and powerful. We were granted something amazing, to be implanted in our minds — the realization of how undeniably tiny we are in

comparison to the heavens, yet rare and precious, that we belong to Someone greater than ourselves, that none of us are alone. A Christian cannot have a personal relationship with (i.e., know) Him without knowing His Word and abiding in it. The Word is a powerful tool and is God's guidance for the Christian.

God reveals how much He loves us and what great plans He has for those who love Him. I wish every believer could feel that awe and humility — the hope that comes from His Word. In light of this, let us realize that His Word does not speak to the unsaved for they cannot be holy or spiritual since within them they do not possess the Spirit of God. We see this in **1 Corinthians 2:14**:

But the natural man [unsaved or carnal man] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The Bible was written for the saved; to teach them God's purpose for man. *It was not written for the unsaved. It is not about the unsaved.* As an all-knowing God, He knows your heart, thoughts and intentions. When Scripture speaks of sin and ungodliness, He is speaking of the Christian. Can Christians be ungodly? Of course they can! Christians have a sin nature and can choose to act according to their carnal ["fleshly"] ways. For this reason, God's Word instructs Christians on holy living. And in order for a Christian to know God, His plan and purpose, he must go to His source, the Word of God. Without knowing Him, one cannot realize their calling to the kingdom of the heavens.

And if we are to understand God's Word, we must begin where God began (the Book of **Genesis**), and follow through exactly in the manner God set forth the structure of His Word, so that we can build upon that foundation and understand the meaning behind the events and what is yet to come. Because we have the Spirit within us, the more eager we are to know God, the more He will reveal His Word to us by means of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, as we mature in the Word, the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, and we will be able to spiritually discern whether something said or written is true or false doctrine.

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [lit: God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine [teaching] for reproof [to prove or convince] for correction, for instruction in righteousness [right or just living], that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12, 13)

The Word of God is the measuring stick Christ will use at His judgment seat. God's message is alive and active, penetrating the innermost parts of a person. It distinguishes the thoughts and intents of a person's soul and exposes the spiritual motivations of a believer's heart. The words “*naked*” and “*open*” in **Hebrews 4:13** suggest complete exposure and defenselessness before God. All believers must give account to the all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-powerful God at His Judgment Seat one day.

A correct understanding of Scripture necessitates viewing the types in the Old Testament alongside their antitypes from the New Testament. This is the way God has structured His revelation to man. In the Old Testament, God led His people, the Israelites, out of Egypt to bring them to their inheritance, the land of Canaan. This was the land that God had originally covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Israelites who believed in Him were given instructions to place the shed blood of the lamb over their door posts so that their first-born sons would be saved from death (the substitute lamb's blood was placed to satisfy the shedding of blood as the sacrifice for redemption. Figuratively, Israel died that day; the sacrificial lamb being the substitute). God led them safely out of Egypt and for forty years they were in the wilderness.

God tested their faith to determine who would enter the land of Canaan. Those who remained faithful to Him, that is, only Joshua and Caleb along with the children (who were now young adults), from the first generation of the nation of Israel, were allowed to enter. Nearly two million Israelites fell away, lacking faith in God and committing idolatry. Not only were they not allowed to enter, but were destroyed.

The account of Israel is a “type” (example) for us to realize today (**1 Corinthians 10:1-11**). It is a word-picture for the New Testament “antitype”—all Christians. In the New Testament, God sent His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to shed blood for the sins of the world, so that whosoever believed in Him would be saved from the penalty of spiritual death. Since Pentecost, God has been testing each individual believer’s faith in order to determine who will be a bride for His Son and be able to enter the heavenly land, the kingdom of the heavens, and rule and reign with Him. Of course, God desires for all Christians to remain faithful to Him in order to be saved into His kingdom. This is His purpose for us.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.

Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’

*So I swore in My wrath, ‘they shall not enter My rest [The Kingdom Age—The 7th Day of Rest]’” (**Hebrews 3:7-11**)*

In order for individuals to have the rights of inheritance and possession in this land, then and in the future, they had to belong to the family of God as sons. In other words, they had to be saved individuals; and in the passage above, the children of Israel were indeed children of God. We see this in **1 Corinthians 10:1-5**:

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers [Israel] were under the cloud,

all passed through the sea,

all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food,

and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ.

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

However, because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience to God pertaining to the land, all adults but two were barred from entering into that land to enjoy its blessings. The outcasts of Israel were left with a great loss.

And just as the Israelites under Moses were eternally saved and called out of Egypt to realize an inheritance in another land, so Christians under Christ are eternally saved and are being called out of the world to realize an inheritance in another land, separate from the earth — a heavenly land.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

The word *inherit* or *inheritance* translated from the Greek word *kleronomeo* (Strong's #G2816) means "to be an heir" and *Kleronomia* (Strong's #G2817) means "a possession." Upon our belief in the Lord, we then have access to this inheritance as sons of God because of our positional standing in Christ, handed down from the lineage of Abraham. We have been born again to receive this inheritance — we have been redeemed for a purpose. However, this inheritance is a reward to be received in the future and is not automatic, but conditional. It is dependent upon one's faithfulness to God. Only then can one be considered God's *firstborn* son and thereby be qualified to become the bride of Christ. The Greek word for "reward" is *misthos* (Strong's #G3408) which means "payment for service; wages." And because this

salvation is inherited and therefore part of our reward, it must be earned through faithful obedience to the Word of God after we have been born again. Upon decisions and determinations at the Judgment Seat of Christ, an overcomer will then receive his rewards.

...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:24)

You may be saying, "I am not interested in a reward or in ruling and reigning! I just want to serve Him and be able to enter the kingdom — that is good enough for me." But God says that our understanding is limited to the possibilities that He has in store for us. *God called us to rule and reign.* He has given us the Holy Spirit as a guide to provide a course of growth that will enable us to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of the heavens. Imagine experiencing the joy and fulfillment of being accepted by our Lord at His judgment seat, of angels placing crowns on our heads, and of ruling and reigning by the side of Christ Jesus. *This is God's will for us.*

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10, 11)

A Christian who comes to a full understanding of God's plan and purpose will begin to lay hold of the "hope" that is set before him. This "hope" is mentioned throughout the New Testament, and when properly understood, will transform him from a life of being self-centered to one of being Christ-centered. Very few people today are interested in the deeper knowledge of the Word of God. They are content to be babes in Christ throughout their life, ignoring the meat of the Word.

God has extraordinary things planned for the Christian's future, yet most are unaware. The hope that God exhorts us to lay hold of relates to these "extraordinary things" in the coming kingdom, things having to do with ruling and reigning with Christ from the heavens. This is our motivation for overcoming the trials we face here on earth. The "blessed hope" centers on our anticipation of the appearing of our Lord in the air and the establishment of His kingdom. The hope of the Christian is that he will be

qualified to enter the kingdom and occupy a position of rulership with Christ.

...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." (Titus 2:13)

...but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2, 3)

How many Christians have this hope? Sadly to say, not many do. Most Christians do not have any hope for the future kingdom. Not many hope to see the Lord. What a shame this is, considering that a life in the kingdom serving Christ will be the most awesome and glorious life one could possess, and it cannot be compared to the best life here on earth.

The following prayers were written from the pen of Paul, which he offered on behalf of the Ephesians and the Colossians. These prayers are a most significant revelation from God, which merit our closest attention and earnest study.

Paul prays for the Ephesians, who are eternally saved and growing in grace, that they may receive the full knowledge of God's Word:

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks to you, making mention of you in my prayers:

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;

that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...

(Ephesians 1:15-19)

As soon as he heard of the faith of the Colossians, Paul began interceding by praying to God for them, asking that they may be filled with the knowledge of His will:

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy,

giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
(Colossians 1:9-14)

God has laid out His plan of redemption since eternity past and has qualified those Christians whom *He foreknew would walk worthy of the Lord* to be partakers of the inheritance in the age to come. This is what these prayers reveal.

God's will is that we abide in faithful obedience to His Word so that we will be victorious in our race of the faith. This means walking in the Spirit, being transformed into the image of His Son. God has made it clear to "*do business*" until He comes (**Luke 19:13**). This means we must show our worthiness to enter the kingdom by growing in the Word, doing good works for Him, and eagerly awaiting His return.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1, 2)

God's purpose is to redeem man to the position for which he was originally created — to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

In Him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:7-12)

God's calling is a heavenly calling to the kingdom. He is calling all Christians to abide in His Word and overcome their life in this age in order to be qualified for inclusion into the kingdom in heaven. Life here on earth is only for a short while, just a temporary dwelling. Christians are not to be a part of this world, but separate, awaiting their true home — a heavenly home.

These [Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah] all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13, 16)

God's will, purpose and calling is exactly the same for all Christians — to rule and reign with Christ in the coming Kingdom Age. And the time is near.

CHAPTER TWO

FULL SCOPE OF SALVATION

Man is a complex and unique creation of God. God “*formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*” (**Genesis 2:7**). And if one studies the anatomy of man — his cell structure, his DNA, his blood flow, his organs and how they all come together in an inclusive and complex unity — it is a surety that only God, the Creator, could have accomplished this most multifaceted and prodigious task.

And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." (**Genesis 1:26a**)

God made man in a most exceptional form. He made man in His “*image*,” in His “*likeness*.” One may wonder about the composition of that “*image*.” In the same verse (**Genesis 1:26a**), God refers to the formation of man in a plural sense, using the words “*Us*” and “*Our*.” In addition, the Hebrew word translated God is *Elohim*, a word that is plural in nature (referring to the Triune Godhead) which means “three,” revealing that God is a tripartite (three-part) being. The number “*three*” in Scripture means “divine perfection and completion; manifested deity; resurrection.” Although God is a Trinity, He reveals Himself in three distinct Persons — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Since God is a tripartite Being and He made man in His image, then man is also a tripartite being. In the “*likeness*” of God, man is composed of a *spirit*, a *soul* and a *body*. (See illustration on page 48)

This is clearly seen when Paul prays for the members of the Thessalonian Church, that each part of their being (spirit, soul and body) may be preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**)

The author of the Book of **Hebrews** also identifies spirit, soul, and body as the three parts of man:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow... (Hebrews 4:12)

Before Adam and the Woman fell into sin they were covered with the glory of God, created in His likeness. But after their fall they found themselves *naked*, no longer having the covering of glory and thereby disqualified from one day exercising their rule (“*dominion*”) over the earth. And the consequence of their fall was that now they existed in a state of death.

“...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16)

The death that they experienced by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was multifaceted in nature. Their spirits immediately died, which placed their souls and bodies in a state of regressive and eventual death. Their souls became corrupted as they now possessed a sin nature and their bodies began to decay, as they no longer were immortal. Therefore, since the fall of Adam, man no longer possessed the image of God, an image that is without sin — from that day forward man has been *born dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1)*. And in order to free man from this sentence of death and the bondage of sin, God sent His Son to shed His blood — signifying His spiritual death (separation from the Father) — thereby paying the price, to the Father’s satisfaction, for man’s sin (**Isaiah 53:4-6, 11; 1 Peter 2:24a**).

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

It would be prudent at this point to understand that the consequence (price) of man’s sin in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:17**) was primarily *spiritual death*, even though physical death was a component. And to understand death contextually within Scripture is to understand that it is a *state of separation*. Just as a person is separated from the connection to life (the animation of the body, also expressed in Scripture as the “soul,” which is contained in the blood [**Leviticus 17:11**]) upon physical death, he becomes separated from his connection to God upon spiritual death. Upon man’s rebellion in the Garden of Eden both Adam and Eve became

separated from God (i.e., the death of their spirits); and, as well, their physical bodies (i.e., the animation of each body, their souls), became subject to the regression of the dying state.

And it was the shedding of blood, represented by the clothing of skin (**Genesis 3:21**) that God provided to cover their nakedness, the complete nakedness from the covering of glory that they enjoyed upon their creation. This may be understood by the contrast of the two Hebrew words for “naked” (**Genesis 2:7; 3:21**) of Adam and Eve (**Genesis 2:7**). And this covering, as a type, looked forward to and represented the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, a death that, when accepted by faith, is the covering for a person’s spiritual nakedness (i.e., his separation [spiritual death] from God).

For it was on the Cross that God the Son experienced *spiritual death* by becoming separated from God the Father for a period of three hours (“*from the six hour [noon] until the ninth hour [3:00 p.m.]* — **Matthew 27:45**), in which He cried, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” *that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’*” (**Matthew 27:46**). This spiritual separation was the price [which satisfied God the Father (**Romans 3:25, 26; 1 John 2:2; 4:10**)] that God, in the person of His Son, paid for the sins of mankind — a price that may only be accepted by faith for man to be eternally saved (**Ephesians 2:8, 9**).

In Christ’s physical death upon the Cross we see the distribution of all three components of His composition, as His soul went to Paradise/ Hades (**Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27; Ephesians 4:9**), His spirit went to God the Father (**Luke 23:46**) and His body to the tomb (**Matthew 27:57-60**).

Upon His resurrection on the third day, all three (spirit, soul, and body) were then re-united. Likewise, upon physical death, the believer’s soul will go up to Paradise, (its location having been relocated from the center of the earth [**Luke 16:22**] to the “*third heaven*” [**2 Corinthians 12:2-4**] when Christ rose from the dead [**Ephesians 4:8-10**]), his spirit will go into the presence of God (**Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8**) and his body will go to the grave (or to be cremated) until he is resurrected. Then, at his resurrection, all three components will be re-united to stand before Christ Jesus at His judgment seat. And those believers who remain alive will be raptured to the Judgment seat of Christ as well (**1 Thessalonians 4:13ff; 2 Corinthians 5:10**).

But for the unsaved upon physical death, the soul will go down to Hades and the body and spirit to the grave until *after* the Millennium. Then, Death and Hades will deliver them up to the Great White Throne Judgment where they will be judged according to their works. Their exclusion from the Book of Life will result in the unsaved being found insufficient by their works; therefore, they will be cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:11ff**).

Beginning the study of man's three components, we find that the *spirit* is the immaterial part of man's composition that was the result of God creating man in God's "*image*," according to His "*likeness*," and then breathing into man's nostrils the "*breath of life*" (**Genesis 1:26; 2:7**). The spirit is that component of man that allows him to be permanently linked to God, to be able to have a relationship with all that is Divine. But it is only when one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ that his spirit is made alive and his eternal salvation is secure.

And he brought them over and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..." (**Acts 16:30, 31**)

But for an unsaved (unregenerate) person, the spirit remains dead, with no link to (or with) God.

The Greek word *pneuma* (Strong's #G4151) is translated both "breath" and "spirit" in the New Testament. The Spirit of God (Breath of God) is the One who gave life to man upon creation, and who gave the living Word to man. From the day that Adam sinned in the Garden and his spirit died, everyone born thereafter possessed a dead spirit. However, Jesus Christ paid the price for the sins of the world and made it possible for man's redemption.

The moment one believes in Christ, the Holy Spirit brings the person's spirit to life. It is at that moment the person who was "*dead in trespasses and sins*" (**Ephesians 2:1**) passes from "*death into life*" (**John 5:24**). And from that moment on, it is possible for God to guide him "*into all truth*" (**John 16:13**) by and through the Word, which is "*living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*" (**Hebrew 4:12**), and

which will transform him by the renewing of his mind that he may “*prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (**Romans 12:2**).

He is now able to commune with God by means of his living spirit as it is inalterably linked to God by and through the Spirit of God, and he is now able to grow from immaturity to maturity. And if the believer will diligently and earnestly seek God through the assimilation of His Word, he will be given “*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*” as his eyes of understanding are enlightened and he understands what is the hope of God’s calling and the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in the saints (**Ephesians 1:17, 18**).

Now He who has prepared us for this for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 5:5) [See also Ephesians 1:13, 14]

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26)

At the beginning of the present dispensation (beginning at Pentecost), God assigned a unique feature to the mission of the Holy Spirit pertaining to His presence in the world — *to acquire a bride for His Son* — which is the *antitype* of the Old Testament *type* of Abraham when he sent his “*oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had*” into Mesopotamia to acquire a bride for his son (**Genesis 24**). In this respect, the Holy Spirit has an entirely different mission from that which He has fulfilled from the time when man fell in the Garden of Eden, man’s eternal salvation. In order to acquire a bride for his Son, which will have direct application relative to the kingdom during the Messianic Era, God commissioned the Holy Spirit for this unique purpose.

Salvation in Scripture is also spoken of in three tenses — past, present and future. This has been done to point out a beginning with an end in view. The Spirit can take the one who now has spiritual life and perform a work in the life of that individual, with a view to an inheritance that will be realized at a future time.

Ephesians 2:8 refers to the salvation of the spirit, which is a past,

completed work based solely on the work (sacrifice) of Christ on the Cross at Calvary. This aspect of salvation is the *gospel of grace*, which is the good news of the free gift of eternal salvation.

“For by grace you have been saved [past tense salvation] through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8)

Once we are eternally saved, we can never again be unsaved, irrespective of what we do. [2 Timothy 2:13]

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:29)

Furthermore, there was nothing that we did to be eternally saved, for the work was completed in the past by the Lord, and therefore there is nothing we can do to become unsaved again.

The salvation of the spirit is just the beginning of our walk with God. All three aspects of our being: *spirit, soul, and body* must be saved to be able to rule and reign with Christ in the Millennium. Salvation of the spirit is exclusively associated with entrance into the kingdom of heaven during the *Eternal Ages*, which does not begin until *one thousand years after* Christ's return.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a prominent aspect of salvation of the spirit (John 7:39; 14:16, 17; Romans 5:5; 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 2:27), will (if allowed) assist the Christian in a righteous walk that will insure the salvation of his soul. The Christian's temporal earthly life is a testing ground of his faith in God, and all that he does during this time will significantly affect his future during the coming Messianic Era. His works performed during his lifetime will surely be judged at Christ's judgment seat to determine whether or not he will be worthy for entrance into the kingdom. As children of God, we are also joint-heirs with Christ, *but only if* we walk like Him, in faith and love through suffering.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint

heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (Romans 8:16, 17)

This takes us into the second component of our created being: *the soul*. The Greek word *psyche* (Strong's # G5590, also spelled "*psuche*") throughout the New Testament is translated "soul" or "life." Therefore, both soul and life mean the same thing and is used interchangeably in Scripture. This word defines the natural life of a person. The soul is the foundation of a person's emotions, feelings, desires, likes and dislikes. In **Leviticus 17:11**, we see that *the life [soul] of the flesh is in the blood*. It is the animating principle of the body of flesh.

By means of the salvation of the spirit, a person is then in a position to realize the purpose of his salvation -- the salvation of his soul or life. The difference between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul is that the salvation of the soul is conditional, dependent on the life one lives after his spirit has been saved, which in turn, is dependent on him allowing the Holy Spirit to lead his life through his own spirit. The Holy Spirit does this by imparting spiritual truth, understanding and direction — functions that are directly connected and proportionate to one's assimilation of Scripture.

The leading of one's life by the Holy Spirit, referred to in Scripture as being "*filled with the Spirit*," may be seen by comparing the following two companion passages of Scripture:

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)

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 whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
(Colossians 3:16, 17)

A proper comparison of these two companion passages clearly indicates that *being filled with the Holy Spirit* is proportionate to one's assimilation of Scripture. One must read and study the living Word of God in order to have the Spirit's truth, understanding and direction. Then, one must act upon the Spirit's truth, understanding and direction, being a doer and not just a hearer of the Word (**James 1:22**). This is not always an easy thing to do, as it requires laying aside our thoughts and desires. But knowing what is to come in the future should inspire us to try hard to set our fleshly desires aside and walk according to the Spirit in order to attain the salvation of our soul.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (**James 1:21**)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time...

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.
(1 Peter 1:3-5, 8b, 9)

All Christians will be judged following their rapture or resurrection in heaven to determine whether they will obtain soul salvation. There will be rewards for those whose works are found worthy, which enables them entrance into the kingdom. There will also be great loss for those who are found unworthy, who will not be able to enter the kingdom, but who are

cast outside in outer darkness where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (an Eastern expression showing deep grief [**Matthew 22:13**]).

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men....
(2 Corinthians 5:10)

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.... **(Hebrews 9:27)**

The salvation of the soul constitutes an active, continuing work of salvation accomplished by the Christian by and through the power of the Holy Spirit. In writing to the Christians in the Grecian city of Corinth, the Apostle Paul uses the present tense in expressing this salvation as a present, continuous work:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
(1 Corinthians 1:18)

This ever-abiding work of the salvation of the soul deals strictly with Millennial life, not eternal life and will be realized at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Christian's eternal salvation, the salvation of the spirit, has already been dealt with by Christ in the past and is a finished work, never to be changed. When Christ came to earth approximately 2,000 years ago, He did so to be the “propitiation” — the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice — for our sins (**Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10**). It was on the Cross that He took the sins of the world, the sins from all of time, became that sin (**2 Corinthians 5:21**) in order to pay the price and satisfy the righteousness and justice of God, so that anyone by faith alone in Christ could receive Eternal life — the salvation of the spirit.

In the near future when the Lord returns the second time, it will be to judge Christians in order to determine the salvation of their souls, which is

millennial in scope. If the Christian allows the Holy Spirit to have proper influence and control in his life, he will become an overcomer and attain the salvation of his soul. The Spirit accomplishes this by teaching him all things that encompasses the whole Gospel (good news of God's grace *and* glory). Whereas the *gospel of grace* is restrictive to the salvation of the spirit of man with eternal verities in view, the *gospel of glory* is focused on the salvation of the soul with millennial verities in view. The gospel of grace and the gospel of glory together present the "*whole counsel of God*" (**Acts 20:27**).

Last, the third part to be saved is *the body*. Salvation of the body will occur at the Judgment seat of Christ.

The salvation of the body is a future tense salvation. In **Hebrews 1:14**, salvation is presented as a future, inherited possession:

Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those [Christians] who will inherit salvation?

This future aspect of salvation marks the final realization of the Christian's redemption, to be apprehended at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It involves the Christian's inheritance — to rule and reign in the kingdom.

The key that unlocks the "*mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens*" (**Matthew 13:11**), the solid food of the Word of God (**Hebrews 5:12-14**) constitutes a proper understanding of the three components of man (*spirit, soul and body*) and the three aspects of salvation (*past, present and future*). All the components of man must be preserved blameless at Christ's return in order to inherit salvation in the kingdom of heaven and gain the reward of rulership with Christ during the Millennium (1000 year reign). Therefore, if a Christian overcomes this present life, at the Judgment seat he will be clothed with the "*wedding garment*" — the "*white garment*" of "*fine linen clean and bright*" (**Revelation 3:5; 19:8**). Being properly clothed will allow him to rule and reign with Christ in the Messianic Era. This wedding garment may indeed be that "covering of light" which covered man at his creation, a covering unique to God (**Psalms 104:1, 2**) and which is a facet of His "image" and "likeness."

The following is a brief overview of spirit, soul, and body salvation:

1) *Salvation of the Spirit* is the aspect of God's redemptive plan for man that is based on a past completed action. It transforms a person from a spiritual state of being dead in trespasses and sins, who has an unredeemed, inanimate spirit, and who is alienated from God (**Ephesians 2:1, 12**); to a spiritual state of being eternally alive in Christ (**John 5:24; Ephesians 2:5**), to a state possessing an animated spirit, possessing spiritual life, and to a state of no longer being separated from the One who Himself is Spirit (**John 4:24**). This transformation, which is a grace-gift from God, is brought to pass by the Spirit of God breathing life into the one having no life, is based solely on Christ's finished work at Calvary, a work that can never be added to by man or God, and is apprehended solely by faith in Jesus Christ (**Acts 16:30, 31; Ephesians 2:8, 9**).

2) *Salvation of the Soul*, on the other hand, should *never* be associated with the past aspect of God's redemptive plan for man. Scripture carefully distinguishes between *the soul* and *the spirit*, never using the words interchangeably in this respect (**Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23**). And Scripture also carefully distinguishes between salvation in relation to *the spirit* and salvation in relation to *the soul*. Salvation in relation to *the spirit* is always dealt with *in a past sense*, whereas salvation of *the soul* is always dealt with *in a present or future sense* (**1 Peter 1:9; James 1:21; Hebrews 10:39**). It represents the further transformation of a person who has experienced the salvation of his spirit; but, unlike the salvation of the spirit, which happens in an instance of time, it is a process that happens over time. And unlike the salvation of the spirit, which is wholly dependent on the work of Christ, it is dependent upon the works of the individual during his temporal life as a Christian.

If one submits to the Holy Spirit by means of the assimilation of God's Word, he will thereby abide in Christ, be sanctified (set apart) in this life, and produce fruit (good works) that will insure the salvation of his soul (**John 15: 1-8; 17:17**). At the Judgment Seat of Christ, he will be qualified to become part of the bride of Christ and to rule and reign with Christ during the Messianic Era. On the other hand, if he should choose to follow his carnal nature during his temporal life, he will suffer grave loss at the Judgment seat and will be denied a position in the coming Millennial kingdom. He will be cast outside of the kingdom, separated from Christ for one thousand years.

...receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully....the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.
(1 Peter 1:9, 10, 12)

It is *this* salvation, the salvation of our souls, which will result in our glorification in the kingdom of heaven and the reception of rewards because of our choice to follow Christ.

3) *Salvation of the Body* is the aspect of God's redemptive plan for man that is strictly future in its realization, determined at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when all Christians will stand before the Judgment seat having raised bodies.

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. **(Romans 8:23)**

However, only those believers who have denied themselves (died to their flesh), have taken up their crosses and followed Christ during this temporal life will be chosen out of the body of Christ, the Church, have their bodies enswathed in glory, and be permitted to rule and reign with Christ during the Messianic Era **(Matthew 16:24-27)**. Those remaining from the body of Christ, who did not deny themselves and produce fruit (good works), will not be allowed to rule and reign with Christ during the Messianic Era. And their bodies will not be enswathed in glory until *after* the Messianic Era.

We find within the foundation laid in **Genesis 1:1-2:3** concerning the process of restoration of the ruined material creation, patterned after the six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest, that it also presents another facet, a picture of the process of our own salvation. The work presented within each day of the six days of restoration represents a process that every individual must exercise in order to find rest in the seventh Day. It is a picture of the process of the successful Christian life, an instructional overview of becoming an overcomer. Without exercising this process, salvation of the soul will be denied.

DAY ONE

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:3)

The first day is the beginning point of restoration. God speaks into that which is only darkness in order that light will shine. This is representative of our spirit salvation, salvation by grace through faith. This represents the Holy Spirit, our guarantee of Eternal salvation, the free gift of God, bringing light and life to that which was only darkness and death. And this is based solely and completely on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. Day one begins the day we place our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ (*passing from death unto life*), receiving the free gift of the Holy Spirit, securing our eternal salvation. Now that we have received the indwelling Holy Spirit, which is the light, and eternal salvation, day two through day six presents another facet, something beyond the salvation we presently possess. The following five days has to do with things surrounding the salvation of the soul. And it is interesting to note that God spends one day on spirit salvation and then five days on the salvation of the soul.

DAY TWO

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

Subsequent to our new spiritual birth, passing from death unto life, we are now in a position to recognize a division between our spirit and soul. We now have a redeemed spirit; however we still possess an unredeemed soul. The recognition of this division through the assimilation of God’s Word will help us to realize the difference between things which are heavenly

and things which are earthly. That which is associated with the heavenly: *“It is the Spirit who gives life”* (**John 6:63**), and that which is associated with the earthly: *“The flesh profits nothing,”* will become evident. The believer will recognize those things which are spiritual and those which are carnal; and the former must be exercised in the believer’s life in order to advance to maturity. The separation of the carnal from the spiritual must take place; it will require a separation from the world and, at the same time, a commitment to follow the heavenly land.

DAY THREE

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day. (Genesis 1:9-13)

On the third day, God causes the dry land to appear from the midst of the waters, formerly in the place of death, but now arising out of the water in order that the earth can produce seeds and fruit. The number “three” in Scripture means “divine perfection and completion; resurrection.”

The third day signifies resurrection, arising from the place of death to newness of life. This is a picture of baptism when a believer commits to dying to the flesh and walking according to the Spirit. It is the practice of transforming from the “old man” to the “new man in Christ.” A perfect example of this resurrection can be seen with the nation of Israel during the Exodus. The crossing (putting to death) and arising (resurrection) out of the Red Sea is the symbol of water baptism; it is the next requirement for the salvation of the soul. Without water baptism, without putting to death the flesh and walking according to the Spirit, one will not be able to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (**John 3:5**)

The only way a Christian is able to produce fruit for the kingdom is to put to death the flesh (the carnal desires and thoughts) and allow the Holy Spirit to guide him (the fruit of the Spirit; being mindful of the things of God).

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the death by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3, 4)

Only those who are determined to die to the flesh and walk in the Spirit will find themselves in a position as firstborn sons of God, qualified for rulership: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Romans 8:14).*

DAY FOUR

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; "and let them be for light in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. (Genesis 1:14-19)

On the fourth day, God produced a further division of Day and Night by creating the Sun, Moon and the Stars. They were created in order to mark the passage of time and for the purpose that these lights were *to give light on the earth and to divide the day from the night*. These lights have a dual meaning. Christ is "the Light of the world."

"I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:46)

The Church, as part of the body of Christ, is also to be the “light of the world.”

“You are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14, 16)

A Christian is to receive the Light, by and through the study of the Word, and then he is to shine this light for all to see (**Luke 8:16-18**). This light represents the gospel of the glory of Christ, that which is brought forth from above to shine on the earth.

...whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

The greater light rules over the day and is more powerful than the lesser light which rules over the night. Christ is the Light and Satan is the Darkness; a symbol that represents a division of the light from the darkness. A Christian is to walk in the light as “sons of the day,” not as “sons of the darkness.”

You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:5-8)

We are to be “sons of the light,” possessing the knowledge of the gospel of the glory of Christ; and then we are to be “sons of the day,” walking or abiding in the light and looking up unto Jesus, awaiting His return with the hope of [soul] salvation.

DAY FIVE

Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of

the firmament of the heavens.” So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply; and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. (Genesis 1:20-23)

The word “waters” in Scripture usually means “the Holy Spirit.” The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians produces an abundance of knowledge and good works for the building of the kingdom. Through the continued revelation of the Spirit through the Word of God, Christians are able to soar to great spiritual heights, abounding in good works. Furthermore, just as the fish plumb the depths of the seas, so Christians can plumb the depths of the deep things of God by the Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:10**). We are to be fruitful in this and multiply the house of the Lord.

DAY SIX

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind”; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves on the earth.”

And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. “Also, to every beast of the

earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Genesis 1:24-31)

On the sixth day, as part of the restorative process of the original material creation, God created all of the living creatures that live on the earth; and then He created man *to have dominion* over all living creatures and over all of the earth. God commanded that man “be fruitful and multiply.” And in order to do this, God provided everything man needed, such as the herb that yields seed, and every fruit tree that yields seed. God provided Christians with the food, which is the Word, in order that they may bear more fruit and build the kingdom. God created all things on the earth for man, so that man could prepare for their rule over the earth. The number “six” in Scripture is the number for man — Man’s Day — a period of six thousand years in which man is to “work out their own salvation” by being

“doers of the Word” in the hopes that he will rule over the earth in that Seventh Day.

DAY SEVEN

Then the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Genesis 2:1-3)

At the conclusion of this six day process, God’s work was completed and He rested on the seventh day. God set apart and hallowed the seventh day as the day of rest — the Messianic Era, which is yet to come.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest

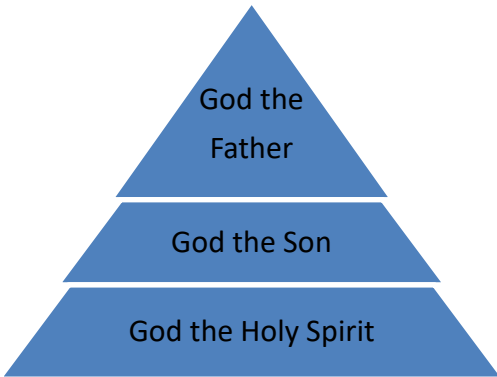
anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.
(Hebrews 4:9-11)

A “rest” remains for the people of God, those who will have produced the works laid out within the six days of restoration. This is the revealed way in which God has outlined for man to journey. And this is why the salvation of the soul — having to do with a participation with Christ as co-heir on the Seventh Day — cannot be realized apart from accomplishing this journey and producing the works from days two through six in the **Genesis** account.

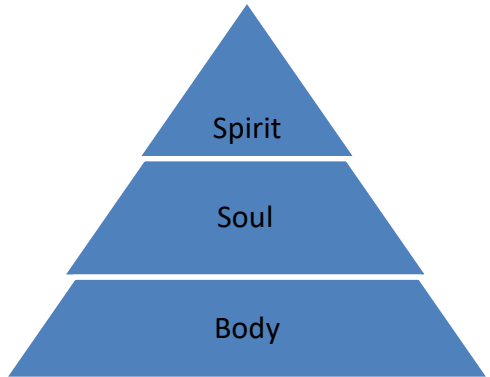
Three-Part Salvation

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...." (**Genesis 1:26**)

God is a Tripartite:



Man is a Tripartite:



Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24**)

The Gift of Eternal Life



Salvation of the Spirit

Past tense Salvation:
(Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 2:8)

*No Works required,
A Free Gift*

Faith alone in Christ alone

The Reward of the inheritance (Millennial Life)



Salvation of the Soul

Present tense Salvation:
(1 Corinthians 1:18; Hebrews 10:39; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:9)

Salvation of the Body

Future tense Salvation:
(Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:20, 21)

Faith and Works required

CHAPTER THREE

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Introduction

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Romans 14:10b-12)

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:9, 10)

It is evident in the Scriptures that *all* Christians will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account of all their works, whether good or bad. This judgment will take place after the removal of all Christians from the earth to heaven.

The events of the Judgment Seat of Christ will occur between the removal of the Church (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**), and just before the Tribulation upon the earth. In this present dispensation, Christ is ministering as our High Priest, seated at the right hand of the Father (**Hebrews 8:1**). But when the present dispensation comes to a close and Christ returns for His Church, He will then be our Judge.

In **Revelation 1:13ff**, Christ is revealed wearing garments indicative of a Judge, seen “*clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.*” His presence as Judge is also revealed by His appearance in which “*His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters...out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His*

countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.” This description of Christ is symbolic of His authority and power as Judge.

The words, “judgment seat,” are translated from the Greek word *bema*, which is described as an elevated platform containing a magistrate’s chair. The magistrate occupying this chair issued various decrees and judgments. The word “bema” has been used in connection with the ancient Grecian athletic games in Athens, as it contained a bema seat, an elevated platform upon which sat an official. The use of the word “bema” in this respect can show a partial comparison to the Judgment seat of Christ only when dealing with rewards, as the official at the games did not pass any judicial activity in connection with loss, only rewards for the victor.

However, at the Judgment seat of Christ, every participant in the race of the faith will be judged, whether a victor or not; and depending on the Judge’s determinations, rewards or loss will follow. In **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**, Paul compared himself to a contestant in the Grecian games, except with a different goal in view. He prepared himself spiritually, as a contestant in the race of the faith, with his goal being the prize for the *incorruptible crown that does not fade away*. Paul knew that he would appear before Christ’s bema seat at the determined end of the contest and would either be approved for the incorruptible crown or disapproved (denied the crown and suffer loss). At the time of Paul’s death, he knew that he had finished the race victoriously and that he would receive the crown of righteousness in the Lord’s Day, at His Judgment seat.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (**2 Timothy 4:7, 8**)

The Christian’s spirit-salvation [eternal salvation] does not automatically qualify him at Christ’s Judgment seat to enter the Millennial Kingdom. It only places him in a position where he can appear at Christ’s Judgment seat. Otherwise, if he is not spiritually saved, he will not appear at His Judgment seat; but, he will appear at the Great White throne judgment [with the unsaved] after the Millennium (**Revelation 20:7a, 11-15**).

Why are Christians judged? As seen in **Genesis 1:26b**, God created man to rule and reign in His kingdom. However, man must prove worthy to be awarded this position. Man was given a choice, in which he can choose to be faithful or unfaithful to God. After Israel's rejection of the kingdom of the heavens (the heavenly aspect of the kingdom), the Church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, was brought into existence to be the recipient of that part of the kingdom (**Matthew 21:43**). Subsequently, they must appear in judgment to reveal their qualifications [by fire] for occupying regal positions as a co-heir with Christ in the kingdom.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, Christians will be judged on the basis of “works,” whether these works were done out of faithfulness or unfaithfulness; whether they were done in the flesh or in the spirit. They will be judged by the Word in accordance to the Word. God has already judged sin at Calvary, and was satisfied based on Christ's completed work — His sacrifice on the Cross. However, man having been redeemed through the Spirit, is directly responsible for producing good works for the Lord. God's command to Christians is “*work out your own salvation,*” by putting away sin from their lives. Christians refusing to expel sin from their lives are producing works of the flesh and will be cut off from their inheritance, but not from their eternal salvation.

The Greek word for “sin” is “*harmartano*” (Strong's# G264) which simply means “to miss the mark (and not share in the prize); to offend.” Christians are to confess their sins and work at putting them away completely — for the duration of their life. When sins are confessed they are forgiven (**1 John 1:9**), as we have Christ presently interceding for us as our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14ff**). But those individuals who fail or refuse to confess sin and who habitually sin will have to face their Judge at His Judgment seat. *Works* will be judged to determine every Christian's placement in the Millennium, whether they produced *good works* [spiritual works leading to righteousness] or *bad works* [fleshly works leading to sin]. And every person shall give account of his works as they shall be tested by fire.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

During the judgment of the Church, there will be works that reflect the value of “gold, silver, precious stones,” which will endure the fire and gain rewards; and there will be works that reflect the value of “wood, hay, straw,” which will burn in the fire and produce loss. Christians will be judged on how they built upon the foundation, which is Jesus Christ, throughout their life. If they allowed the Spirit of truth to work through them, then they have built on this foundation with good works. If, however, they have built on this foundation with works of the flesh, then the works will not pass the test of fire. They themselves will be saved (*through* [lit. “in”] *fire*), yet suffer loss in the Millennium.

...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

receiving the end of your faith---the salvation of your souls.
(1 Peter 1:7-9)

At the Judgment seat of Christ, Christians will have shown to perform works under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, which will be to their “praise, honor, and glory;” or they will have shown to perform works under the leadership of their “old man” [flesh] and will be found to *shame, rejection and loss* (2 Timothy 2:20, 21). This judgment has everything to do with our placement in the coming Millennial kingdom. It has nothing to do with our eternal salvation.

In **Revelation** chapter **one**, Christ is seen as Judge in the midst of the seven complete Churches with **Revelation** chapter **two** and **three**

providing the reason why these seven Churches (representing Christianity as a whole) are to come under judgment. In each of the messages to the seven Churches, Christ opens each Letter with the phrase, “*I know your works.*” Then, each Church is presented with a description of their past works, a call to repent, and concludes with an overcomer’s promise.

It will be our “works” at the Judgment seat of Christ that will be the determining factor for rewards or loss. The word “overcome” is the Greek word *nikao*, which means “to conquer” or “to gain a victory over.” The “overcomers” are the conquerors, the victors in a contest; they are the ones who will be successful in running the race of the faith during this present age. Overcoming has to do with the one being “*brought forth from above*” now being in the position where he can keep God’s commandments and presently overcome the world. The expression, “*brought forth from above*” (born from above—**Luke 2:7; James 1:17, 18**) is always used relative to the saved. The power to overcome is derived from above, not from the individual — it is allowing the Spirit to take leadership of the individual’s life to perform the work, and not the flesh. These overcomers will be the ones to show “good works” at His Judgment seat, which will pass the test of fire.

God is dealing exclusively with Christians in the present dispensation, allowing them the grace and privilege of overcoming their soul-life and bringing forth good works. At the end of this dispensation, at the Judgment seat of Christ, man will reveal his works in response to the privilege he was given. Therefore, Christians have been saved with a view to bringing forth good works and overcoming their present life by overcoming the world. The “world,” in this respect, refers to the present world system that is under the rule and sway of Satan, a world system that is about to pass out of existence. And the purpose of overcoming is with a view to occupying regal positions with Christ in the heavenly kingdom, positions that are Millennial in scope.

Overcoming simply means to follow the footsteps of Christ, steps that are connected with suffering during this present time; but afterwards, with glory during the Millennium. The sufferings of Christ — His shame, reproach, rejection and pain on the Cross — were endured with a view to the throne. He overcame because of the “*joy that was set before Him*” (**Hebrews 12:2**) — the hope of glory. And the call has gone forth for

Christians to overcome as He overcame for the same reason — to ascend the throne, to rule and reign with Him.

Many Christians are completely unaware of their offered inheritance, the Judgment seat of Christ and the salvation of the soul. They have been exposed to the teachings of only one part of their salvation, the salvation of the spirit, and therefore are only familiar with the gospel of grace, which centers on faith apart from works. This teaching attempts to apply *all* Scriptural references to the topic of “salvation,” solely to the salvation that we presently possess; thereby removing all scriptural truth having to do with our future salvation, with millennial verities in view. This has produced much confusion, complacency and indolence in Christendom. Be careful when hearing what man has to say about this matter. *The Word of God alone* contains the correct information to properly address this doctrine.

The result of being in this darkened state of mind is that a Christian will not be properly prepared to face his judgment at the close of this dispensation and will find himself at a great loss. As prophesied in the Scriptures, many Christians today walk as *in the days of Noah*, unprepared to face their Lord, and living as though nothing of significance will transpire in the future. They live to eat, drink and be merry without any thought of their future judgment or without any view of the kingdom to come. They involve themselves in the affairs of this present world system ruled under the “*god of this age* [Satan]” (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), which will result in they being overcome by the world rather than they overcoming the world.

Only those Christians who involve themselves in the Word of God and produce fruit will be the overcomers to inherit with Christ (**Matthew 21:43; John 15:1-8**). Christ Himself, when He was tempted by Satan, revealed that the way to overcome Satan and his temptation is by use of the Word of God (**Matthew 4:4**). Just as Christ overcame, having suffered through his rejection, shame and reproach, culminated at Calvary; we, in like manner, are called to overcome, by occupying our proper place in the face of suffering. When Christ returns to earth the second time, He will exalt overcoming Christians in His kingdom, just as God the Father exalted Christ when He overcame the world (**John 16:33; 17:4, 5**).

Christ is currently seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high and is awaiting the time when He will establish His kingdom. Until then, Christians are expected to “*do business*” (KJV: “*occupy*”) until Christ sets up His kingdom (**Luke 19:12-15**). Even now, preparations are taking effect for the manifestation of climatic events, events prophesied through Moses and all the prophets, which will bring this dispensation to a close. Everything in this world is moving in the direction as God planned, for His will and purpose *will* be fulfilled.

The present dispensation will soon end and Scripture presents the rapture and resurrection of the Church and their appearance at the Judgment seat of Christ as the next prophetic event that will mark the near termination of this dispensation. At the Judgment seat of Christ, Scripture presents the Church in a dual fashion, those who are overcomers — a small remnant of faithful Christians — and those who are not, both elements seen in the seven Churches described in **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three**.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, every Christian will receive “*a just reward,*” (**Hebrews 2:2, 3**), a just payment that will commensurate with that which is revealed by his works. Every Christian will “*receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*” (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). Those Christians who are overcomers during this lifetime will be those who have performed good works through the Spirit — “*some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*” (**Matthew 13:23**). And because some will produce more fruit than others, they will occupy higher positions in the kingdom. There will be different levels of rewards presented, depending on the amount of works performed and judged worthy.

Likewise, non-overcoming Christians will be those who have performed bad works of the flesh, through an unholy affiliation with the world, and will receive the punishment reserved for them outside of the kingdom. Different levels of punishment will be distributed to them, depending on the outlay and severity of their bad works performed during this present age.

In **Revelation 3:14-22**, the account of the Laodicean Church, a prophetic account of the last days of this present age, Christ stands ready to assist any Christian who will submit to Him, as He knocks, saying,

“If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

This invitation is bestowed upon each individual Christian of the Laodicean Church of today. The questions we must ask ourselves are this: Do I want to commit my life to becoming an overcomer? Do I want to inherit the kingdom in the age to come and sit with Christ on His throne?

The overcomer’s promise, given to each of the seven Churches in **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three**, is connected with rewards, regality, crowns, and glory in the kingdom of the heavens during the coming Messianic Era. From decisions and determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ, Christians will either come into possession of these things or they will lose it all for one thousand years. The determinations will be based solely on the Christian’s “works” during his lifetime on earth, which will reflect his love and service to Christ or his failure to do so.

The aspect of overcoming in each of the seven Letters to the Churches in **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three** is related to conditions that each particular Church was experiencing; and although there were seven promises relative to overcoming given to these seven Churches, each promise should not be considered unique to any one Church. The number “seven” in Scripture shows *completeness for that which is in view*. Since seven Churches were addressed, this reveals the complete Church to which all of the overcomer promises apply; and, all will be realized by overcoming Christians during the Messianic Era. In other words, all works, the need to repent, and the overcomer’s promises given to the seven Churches of that day are applicable to *all* Christians today.

It is also evident that these seven Letters to these Churches, due to the order in which they have been arranged by God, present another truth. Beginning with the Church in Ephesus and ending with the Church in Laodicea, it is evident that these Churches present an overall view of Church history, covering the entire present dispensation. The order in which these Churches are addressed reflect the deteriorating condition of the Church as a whole throughout this dispensation.

A “dispensation” is an administration within a period of time during which God is allowing man to be tested in order to determine his ability to rule the earth. There have been three

dispensations of two thousand years each since Adam and from Pentecost to the end of this age marks the third and final dispensation — more on this in Chapter four.

Furthermore, the conditions addressed in each Church, beginning with those in the Church in Ephesus who “*left their first love,*” are not problems unique to any one Church or period of time; rather, they represent problems that have continued to exist within the Church since its beginning. Consequently, all of the warnings to Christians in these Letters also apply to all Christians throughout this dispensation.

The warnings presented to the Churches in each of the Letters in **Revelation** chapter’s **two** and **three** cover distinct consequence, all related to the failure to “overcome.” With the Church in Ephesus, it is the removal of its “*lampstand from its place*” (**Revelation 2:5**), which is an implication of being removed from a position of rulership within the kingdom during the Millennium. With the Church in Smyrna, to overcome is “*not to be hurt by the second death*” (**Revelation 2:11**), which is associated with the “*lake of fire*” in **Revelation 20:14**. This brings one to the conclusion that Christians who fail to overcome during this lifetime will be in fact “*hurt by the second death,*” a consequence involving “*the lake of fire.*”

Fortunately, this determination, as with all determinations that emanate from the Judgment Seat of Christ, will only be applicable during the Messianic Era, the thousand year reign of Christ, which will transpire following the seven year Tribulation period upon the earth. It has nothing to do with eternal verities.

Therefore, experiencing the second death in the lake of fire would be synonymous with the loss of one’s soul salvation in the age to come. *It would mean experiencing death in relation to the soul, being separated from Christ and from the life experiences of the riches and glory in the kingdom.*

It has been prophesied almost two millennia ago that at the near close of this dispensation, the Church as a whole will have completely fallen away from the faith. In **Luke 18:8**, Jesus’ question concerning the condition of the Church at the end of this dispensation demands (in the Greek) a negative answer:

...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find [the] faith on the earth?

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, every Christian will find himself in one of two camps. He will either occupy a position of honor and glory or he will occupy a position of shame and disgrace. This judgment of the Church (before the Tribulation), as well as all other judgments (Israel and the saved Gentiles after the Tribulation) will transpire at the end of this age and will only pertain to the Millennial kingdom, pictured for us in **John 5:24-30**,

“Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:28-30)

Judgment is undeniably forthcoming and no one is immune to it. Man has been given the opportunity and the choice to prepare for their judgment and for Christ’s return — the invitation is to overcome with the goal of occupying a regal position with Christ in the coming kingdom.

Christians have been called to “bear fruit,” to get out of their country and take the journey to another land that God will show them — this means for us to be disconnected from this world or the things of this world. Rather, we are to prepare ourselves with divine good works, with a view to occupying the throne with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.

CHAPTER THREE – PART ONE

FEAR OF THE LORD

Knowing that one day soon we will be judged by our Lord Jesus Christ to determine where we will spend the coming Messianic Era of one thousand years should instill the fear of the Lord in each of us; the fear of not pleasing Him and not entering the kingdom of heaven. Having the fear of the Lord gives us the incentive and enthusiasm to seek Him daily, by studying His Word, in order to know what it is we need to do to please Him and to enter “*His rest*.”

The fear of the Lord then has to do with issues surrounding the Judgment Seat of Christ:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. (Hebrews 4:1)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12)

Scripture presents the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)

Contrary to the opinion of many within Christendom, the Bible (Scripture), a product of the Holy Spirit through the agency of select individuals (**2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; John 16:5ff**), is a Book that can only be “spiritually discerned” and therefore can only be understood by Christians who are being led by the Holy Spirit. This is clearly explained by the Apostle Paul in his first epistle to the “*church of God which is at Corinth*.”

These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual

things with spiritual.

But the natural [unsaved or carnal] man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they [things of the Spirit] are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they [things of the Spirit] are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:13, 14)

Gnosis is the Greek word for “knowledge,” and *Epignosis* emphasizes this word to mean a “higher, full, or mature knowledge.” Christians, by the indwelling Holy Spirit (**John 14:17; 16:13; 1 John 2:27**) have the ability to receive the *epignosis* of the Word of God. In and through the study of the Word, Christians have the ability to rightly divide the Word, and within this knowledge, they will come to understand the things concerning their future judgment, things associated with “*the fear of the Lord.*”

The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil. (Proverbs 19:24)

The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened. (Proverbs 10:27)

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Greek: Gehenna].” (Matthew 10:28)

Fear and reverence for God motivates us to remain steadfast in His Word and in turn, to work at being transformed into the image of Christ. The word “fear” in Scripture is the Greek word, *phobos*, which means “terror, fear, apprehension.” It is a fear relative to events at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This fearful mindset prepares us to be ready for the Lord by producing fruit through the Spirit, eagerly waiting for His return and having the hope of being found worthy at our future judgment. God says wisdom and understanding of His Word produces a fear of the Lord, a foundational principal to our spiritual growth. God *commands* all Christians to acquire and develop wisdom and understanding by consuming His Word so that they may produce fruit, which will lead to their approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ and to their qualification for entrance into the kingdom.

My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her (wisdom) as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures;

Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:1)

Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you. (Proverbs 4:7-9)

Many believe that the Judgment Seat of Christ is strictly for rewards, not loss, and that all Christians will be highly rewarded after they are raptured. But Scripture tells otherwise.

...knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...
(2 Corinthians 5:11)

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.
(Hebrews 12:28, 29)

The previous Scriptures associate the Judgment Seat of Christ with knowing the terror of the Lord. If all Christians are being presented with rewards, why should there be any *terror of the Lord*? Why should we *persuade men* if there is no loss?

Examples of the Judgment Seat of Christ are presented in the parables within the Books of **Matthew** and **Luke**. *A parable is a truth given in story form that explains a previously revealed truth.* Parables were extensively used by our Lord to teach the “mysteries of the kingdom,”

which were to be received and understood by the saints. They were not for Israel, whose hearts were dull and could not understand them.

In **Matthew 25:14-30**, the parable of the talents, we have presented a pictorial representation of the Lord's judgment to His sons. Jesus Christ is the Man who is to go away to a far country, to receive a kingdom and then to return. He left his servants (Christians) with His goods (meaning His personal possessions), and each were given a different amount of talents [monetary value] according to their abilities. They were to do business of trading the talents they were given while He was away. The servant who was given five talents traded them for five more and the one given two talents traded them for two more. But the one given one talent, hid the talent, and did nothing with it. When the Man returned, He came back to reckon with the servants, so that they could give account of what they had done with the talents that they were given. The servants who had doubled their portion of talents, were rewarded from the Lord, saying,

“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in little things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (**Matthew 25:21**)

But the servant who did nothing with the talent he was given was rebuked by his Lord, who called him a *“wicked and lazy servant”* (**Matthew 25:26**) and cast him into the outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth (an eastern expression that signifies sorrow and regret).

This parable presents a clear picture of what the future holds for all Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It presents the account of Jesus Christ when He ascended to heaven to prepare a kingdom followed by the prophecy of His return for His Church. He has left His servants, the Church, with His goods (i.e., the Holy Spirit and the Word of God) in order that they may produce good works for the building of His kingdom during this present time. When Christ returns He will judge His servants according to the works they have done.

A life composed of works done in the power of the Holy Spirit will result in rewards and in entering the kingdom. A life composed of works done in the flesh will result in loss and being cast into outer darkness, the darkness outside of Christ's presence. Christians, at this point, will be

shown to be either qualified or disqualified to occupy positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

who will render to each one according to his deeds, eternal (in this context, means “age-lasting” or “millennial”) life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor and immortality;

but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness---indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. (Romans 2:5-11)

In the previous Scripture, Christians are divided into two categories, those *walking in the light* and those *walking in darkness*. Those Christians who continue harboring sins of the flesh [walking in darkness] will be treasuring up wrath in the Day of wrath, and only those Christians who patiently endure in divine good works [walking in the light] will possess Millennial life.

There is even a greater warning given to a distinct group of Christians, which is revealed in the Book of **Hebrews**:

For if we sin willfully [fall away; apostatize] after we have received the knowledge [epignosis] of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26, 27)

How can this sin differ from any other sin that Christians can commit and confess? The only way to properly understand the “willful sin” in **Hebrews 10:26**, for which there is no sacrifice [no repentance], is to view

it within the context of the Book of Hebrews. The matter pertaining to this sin has to do with “*so great a salvation*” (**Hebrews 2:3**), a salvation relative to the land that God has promised — the occupation of which requires a firm belief (faith) in God’s Word. Within the scope of this salvation, the Book of Hebrews relates this “willful sin” back to the type, the Israelites (less Joshua and Caleb) at Kadesh-Barnea and their refusal to believe God’s promise, to go into the Promised Land and to possess it — the land that God had called them to inherit. And because of their rebellion against God, which clearly demonstrated their lack of faith (**Hebrews 4:2; 10:36-39**), they committed a sin against God for which there was no sacrifice (**Numbers 13**).

Because of Israel’s lack of faith in believing God’s promise that they could enter and successfully occupy the land of Canaan, even after witnessing God’s miraculous acts of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, God would no longer permit them (except Joshua and Caleb who did in fact demonstrate proper faith in God’s promise) to occupy Canaan; but instead, confined them to the wilderness for a period of forty years, until all (except for Joshua and Caleb) who were twenty years of age and older died (**Numbers 14**). And even though Israel realized their most serious error and exercised repentance (a change of mind), God would not repent regarding His judgment.

Because of the willful sin (apostasy) that they committed against the Lord, there was no room for repentance. The word “apostasy” is the Greek word *apostasia* (Strong’s #G646) which means “defection from truth; falling away; forsake.”

And Christians, as the antitype, can commit the same exact sin relative to the heavenly land, the kingdom of the heavens, for which they have been called. This willful sin has to do with falling away or “apostasy” after a Christian has come into a mature knowledge of the Word of the kingdom — the things surrounding the heavenly Promised Land.

When one turns back after receiving the message of the kingdom, a kingdom which God has prepared for him and is founded upon Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary, then he has committed this willful sin. This will ultimately result in the Christian failing to come into possession of this “*so great a salvation*” at the Judgment Seat of Christ. A Christian committing

this act of apostasy, according to **Hebrews 10:29**, has sinned against Christ's work at Calvary, considering it a common thing:

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Before the foundation of the world, God's ultimate plan and purpose for His Son was to award Him a kingdom. Because He regards this matter at the highest level of importance, He considers the "willful sin" (apostasy, i.e. falling away) of a kingdom believer to be committing an act of complete rejection against Christ and an act of insult against the Spirit. The word *trampled* in the Scripture above is the Greek word *katapateo* (Strong's #G2662) which means "to reject with disdain: — trample, tread (down, underfoot).

The Judgment Seat of Christ for some believers will be an awesome and glorious day, but for others it will be the most terrifying day they will ever experience. For those who do not study the Scriptures and are deceived into thinking that *the Lord is not a judging or vengeful God, but is always a rewarding God*, resulting in their failure to follow or fear Him, they will be totally horrified on that Day of judgment.

"For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:30, 31)

At that time, the fear of the Lord will be realized and a just payment will be rendered. Those Christians will wish they were back on earth going through the Tribulation! The good news is that one can repent and make the right choice to know and follow Him right *now*.

CHAPTER THREE – PART TWO

REWARDS OR LOSS

(Continuation of the Prologue)

After Jacob (Brave Heart) was found worthy at the Judgment Seat of Christ, he leaves the throne room and enters the kingdom. He is immediately escorted to the wedding hall where John the Baptist is there waiting for him along with others who will make up the bride.

As he enters the kingdom he wonders how many more will be entering behind him. He is overwhelmed with joy! As he glances down at himself he realizes he is now a spirit with a glorious body, gleaming like the rays of the sun. He feels amazing as he comes to a thorough understanding of Paul's words to the Christians in Philippi when he wrote,

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:20, 21).

He feels free from mental and physical pain, that which he had endured on earth. All that he feels now is joy within, and his body feels light and airy but full of strength and power. He is perfect in every way now, and ready to serve the Lord.

John glances at Brave Heart and says,

"Wait here, and when the marriage supper is set up, it will be two thousand three hundred days from now on the Sabbath. But for now, Christ our Lord will begin with the opening of the seals as we witness the beginning of tribulation on earth, such as never before."

Brave Heart asks,

"What is it that I should do until then?"

John replies,

"As a friend of the Bridegroom, I have been appointed to arrange the preliminaries of the wedding, to manage the wedding, and to preside at the wedding feast. Follow me and we will begin preparing for the marriage supper as we wait for the rest of the bride. After the wedding, you will be preparing for your rule over the cities of the earth in accordance with the Lord's instructions. But first, He must leave for a short while to conquer the nations and the beast on the earth. Then He will return and your reign will begin. Congratulations! Rejoice over your reign in the kingdom!"

With many questions floating in his mind, Brave Heart asks,

"Thank you, and may I ask how many others will be attending?"

John answers,

"Christ is the Judge, many were called, but few will be chosen."

During the next two days, other overcomers arrive at the wedding hall, assisting with the preparation of the wedding feast. On the third day, the commencement of the opening of the seals is ready to begin.

The multitudes enter the throne room of God. He who sits on the throne is like a sardius stone in appearance, like the rays of the sun. Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones are twenty-four elders seated, clothed in white robes with crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeds lightening's, thundering's, and voices. Seven lamps of fire are burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.



Twenty-four Elders (above) and Crown (below)
(The holy angels will relinquish their crowns to Christ for His bride)



Then the twenty-four elders fall down before God in the throne room of heaven where He is seated and they worship Him, and they cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

In the right hand of God who sits on the throne is a scroll written inside and on the back, which is sealed with seven seals. And when Christ the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, took the scroll out of the right hand of God, four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song, saying,

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Afterwards, many angels who are around the throne, the number of them is ten thousand times ten thousand, and then thousands of thousands, say with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then the Lamb opens the first seal; and one of the four living creatures says with a voice like thunder,

"Come and see."

Brave Heart and the multitudes watch as the Antichrist conquers with the spirit of delusion throughout all the nations of the world. This is the beginning of sorrows. The Tribulation has begun. Antichrist makes a covenant of peace with Israel and they begin rebuilding the Holy Temple. The Jewish leaders bring into effect the Levitical laws and sacrifices associated with the Temple. There is much chaos in the world and

everyone, rich and poor, small and great are looking to the Antichrist to bring peace and prosperity. Three and a half years have just gone by.

Ensuing, the Lamb opens the second seal. Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel by bringing an end to sacrifice and offering. He enters and damages the Temple, placing his image in it for all to worship or be killed. War, bloodshed and killing are rampant as the Antichrist seeks to slay the Jewish people. This is the commencement of the Great Tribulation. The Jewish people are told to run for their lives, to flee to the mountains where God has prepared a safe haven for them. Brave Heart watches intensely as he remembers reading about this so many times.

As the Lamb opens the third seal, there is complete silence in the throne room. A drought strikes the lands, therefore prices for wheat, barley and produce are extremely high. After much war and death, the aftermath is worldwide famine. Antichrist takes control of the currency, the food and the people as he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead in order that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark of the beast.

When He opens the fourth seal, some of the witnesses cry as they see widespread death on earth. This is the inevitable consequence of the first three seals: killing, extreme famine and pestilence. Brave Heart watches intensely at the horrific scene that is taking place on earth. This Holocaust is far worse than the last. Millions of Jews are being taken captive and sold as slaves to the nations worldwide and millions of others are slaughtered.

Christ opens the fifth seal and everyone in the throne room can see under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God and for their testimony. They cry out to God with a loud voice to give vengeance on the wicked. Each martyr is given a white robe and told to rest until God's appointed time. His vengeance will come in His perfect time.



THE GREAT TRIBULATION on earth
(Israel and the Gentile Nations)



The sixth seal opens and there is a great earthquake, shaking one end of the earth to the other, which signifies the collapse of the governments of the earth marking the near end of the world. The nation's leaders watch the desolation of their commerce and power. There is complete destruction of governments worldwide. God avenges the saints who were slain by those who worshipped Antichrist as He releases demons from the bottomless pit to torture them. Others hide in mountainous caves and rocks, but no matter how strong and mighty their defense, they cannot stand. As these judgments occur, many people continue to curse God, refusing to repent.

The overcomers witnessing all of this in the throne room in heaven are so thankful to God that they are safe in the kingdom. One overcomer is astonished with the people's actions, saying,

"Why don't the men on earth repent?!"

But God has put it in the people's hearts to be deceived by the beast. At this time the Jewish people cry out to the Lord in repentance and He hears their cry. Angels are instructed to remove any hindrance that prevents the nations and the Antichrist from moving into Israel, to prepare for the battle of Armageddon in which Satan, the beast and the false prophet persuade the kings of the whole world to battle against Israel. The armies of the world are being gathered by demonic spirits in an attempt to destroy Christ, His army of angels and the nation of Israel. The Son of Man is now preparing for His second return to earth to battle against them and to redeem Israel.

...Meanwhile, in the heavenly throne room, the time has come for the wedding to begin.

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship God who sat on the throne, saying,

"Amen! Alleluia!"

Then a voice came from the throne, saying,

"Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

A great multitude responds, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thundering, saying,

"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready."

And to the bride it is granted that she be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. In unison they all stand and proclaim,

"Blessed are we who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"

Each overcomer's new name is announced and presented to Christ as His bride. As each one walks up to the throne, colorful lights are shining everywhere and the angels are playing beautiful music. All of the bride watch in amazement!

The wedding feast is celebrated for several days, with singing, dancing and conversing. On the last day, the Bridegroom says,

"Rest, for my army of angels and I will go to conquer the kings of the earth and the beast, and then I will return. Be prepared to rule and reign over the cities of the earth."

The bride follows Christ to the great kingdom hall of many rooms where they will dwell. The construction of its wall is of jasper; and the hall is pure gold, like clear glass. There is no need of the sun or moon or any other form of light to shine on it, for the glory of the Lord illuminates it. And the bride shall walk in its light with the Bridegroom forever.

Meanwhile, the servant who lost his inheritance had a different fate awaiting him when he was thrust out into outer darkness, bound hand and foot. While the whole kingdom inside is brilliantly lit with the presence of the Lord, outside is total darkness where the unfortunate man has been cast. There is no joy or peace, but weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth at being deprived of the pleasures forfeited. What utter regret and sorrow! He failed to have his soul saved and will now have to remain outside the

kingdom for one thousand years in darkness. And many, many others are now following the footsteps of the unworthy servant.

When the massive gates of the kingdom shut behind them, many continue to stand there for days knocking at the door and saying,

"Lord, Lord, open for us!"

And the Lord answers,

"I do not know you."

Then one unworthy servant says,

"Lord, Lord, have I not prophesied in Your name, and have I not diligently attended Your house of worship on behalf of myself and my family?"

And then the Lord answers,

"I tell you I do not know you; depart from Me, you worker of iniquity."

The others behind him begin to weep and wail with despair. They all cry out,

"Lord, Lord, save us from this misery of darkness!"

Once again, they are rejected from entering the kingdom for one thousand years until the Eternal Ages begin.

As Christ prepares His return to earth, four angels are instructed to stand at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, to protect the judgment from harming the 144,000 Jews who are to be sealed with God's name on their foreheads. Then, multitudes from the Great Tribulation appear in the throne room of God. In view of the great loss of life during this time period, martyrdom was their means of escape.

Then one of the elders said, "One has asked, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and from where did they come from?' I replied that these are

the ones who came out of the Great Tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."

Christ then proclaims,

"Behold, I am coming as a thief! Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walks naked and they see his shame! My Hour has come. My Day has arrived!"

During the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, the power of the unholy trinity (Satan, Antichrist and the false prophet) is poured out upon earth. Satan (the dragon) gives his power, his throne and his great authority over Gentile world power to the Antichrist (the beast from the sea) and to the false prophet (the beast from the earth). The two beasts form a political and religious alliance to deceive all who dwell on the earth. Antichrist is given a voice speaking great things, and he is given authority to rule over every nation. The false prophet exercises all of the authority of Antichrist in his presence and convinces many to worship the Antichrist.

The false prophet performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven onto earth in the sight of men. He tells the earth dwellers to make an image of the Antichrist who was wounded by the sword and lived. Then the false prophet is granted power from Satan to give life and speech to the statue. The statue will then cause many to be killed who will not worship him. Furthermore, he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead so that no one will be able to buy or sell except those that have the mark of the Antichrist. This gives rise to the wrath of God as He makes ready to pour out His vengeance from heaven.

The reaping of the earth's harvest is ready to commence. Many followers of the beast will be killed and Christ will recover the remnant of His people who are left from the four corners of the earth. An angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to every person on earth, says with a loud voice to the saints,

"Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

The bride of Christ, composed of all overcomers including Brave Heart, are ready for their Bridegroom to begin His reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. For the last seven years, the bride has been preparing to rule and reign according to the Lord's instructions. Now she will watch as the Lord battles Satan and his army on earth.

Just then the gates to the throne open and Christ rides in on a white horse. The angels and the twenty four elders fall down and worship Him, saying,

"Amen! Alleluia! Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

Brave Heart and the rest of the bride rise and with a great voice shout,

"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory!"

As he sees the heavens open, Brave Heart says,

"Awesome is our God! In righteousness He judges and makes war!"

The Lord's eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And the armies of angels in heaven follow Him in white horses.

Christ returns to the earth with His angelic army, gathers together the whole house of Israel from the four corners of the world and brings them back to their land, where He pleads His case with them there. The eyes of Israel now perceive and they now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. An angel standing in the sun cries with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven,

"Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, to feast

on the carcasses of the armies who are against Christ."

Antichrist, the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together ready to make war against Christ and His army. With great wrath, they march towards each other. Upon Christ's fierce command and His rod held high, Christ's army captures the Antichrist along with the false prophet and both are cast alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. Those who compose the rest of the army of Antichrist are slain with the sword which proceeds from the mouth of Christ, and all the birds are filled with their flesh. The kingdoms of men have been brought down.

A third angel comes down from heaven, holding the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He lays hold of Satan and casts him into the bottomless pit with the other fallen angels, locks him up, and sets a seal on him, so that he should no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years are finished.

Then, Christ returns to His kingdom wearing the diadems, crowns that were taken from Satan and the other fallen angels. He sits on His throne to commence judgment on the Tribulation martyrs and the saved Gentiles who came out of the Tribulation alive. Many of them were tortured and slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. Others were slaughtered because they had not worshiped the Antichrist or his image, and had not received his mark. And they are awarded the honor and privilege to live and reign with Christ for one thousand years. But the remaining saved Gentiles are found unworthy and are cast out.

Then Christ opens the seventh seal, and there is complete silence in heaven for about half an hour. Seven angels stand before God, and they are given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, comes and stands at the altar. He is given much incense, which is the prayers of the saints, and offers it upon the golden altar that is before the throne. And from the angel's hand the smoke from the burning incense ascends before God! The angel takes the censer, fills it with fire from the altar, and throws it to the earth. And there are noises, thundering, lightning, and an earthquake. This marks Christ's completion of the redemption of the inheritance.

A loud voice is heard from the throne out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, proclaiming, "It is done!"



CHRIST'S RETURN/BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON



Ensuing, Christ commences the ceremony of the crowning of His bride. The multitudes gather together in front of the throne of God. One by one, Christ announces their rewards and instructions of rulership. As each overcomer steps up to the throne, an angel places a *stephanos*, a victor's crown, on the overcomer's head.

It is at this moment that Christ joyfully cries out,

"Brave Heart, come, servant of Mine."

Brave Heart responds,

"In Your service, my Lord and King!"

Christ proceeds,

"Today, I am awarding you rulership over five cities on earth. The cities are in the North and the East. You shall keep order and peace amongst the people of these cities as you rule over them. You shall be the king-priest over these cities, governing with wisdom and power. You shall shepherd the flock and teach them My commands of righteousness, love and peace. I shall be with you always and you shall possess the throne with Me. I will give you to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God and this will give you wisdom to rule effectively. Your reward is the crown of life, the crown of righteousness, and the crown of rejoicing. Joy, peace and love shall follow you all the days of your immortal life. Congratulations My friend, I love you!"

Just then one of the angels comes up and places the crowns on Brave Heart, each crown placed on top of the other.

Brave Heart joyfully cries,

"I love you, my Lord! I will serve You with all my best. Thank You for Your grace and blessings. Glory to You in the highest!"

Brave Heart is filled with emotion, his spiritual body feels powerful. He is so amazed at everything that is happening to him. He thinks that nothing can be compared to this experience.

As the members of the bride receive their crowns and Christ's name written on them, they all sit on their royal chairs.

Then, Christ stands to make an announcement, saying,

"Upon this throne of Mine I will order and establish My kingdom with judgment, justice and peace from this time forward even forever. And you, My bride, God's firstborn sons, will perform this with Me. And of the increase of My government and peace, there will be no end. This work of righteousness will produce peaceful quietness and assurance forever. You will dwell in serene and secure dwellings. From this day forward, you shall be kings and priests. You shall rule over the cities to which you have been assigned and I will be with you forevermore. They will hear your voice and follow your instruction as you establish peace and righteousness upon the earth. In doing so, you will be serving Me."

There is complete silence in heaven as all listen intensely to the Lord's voice. He continues on saying,

"The twelve apostles will rule from heaven over the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribes will dwell on My holy mountain and in My holy city of Jerusalem, a city that no longer shall be subject to destruction. I have set up My throne there, the throne of David, and I will be with My people Israel forever. Therefore, go all you saints and be blessed, for your days will be as the number of the stars in heaven."

The bride cheers,

"Alleluia! Honor and glory be to our Lord God in the Highest forever and ever!"

Every day thereafter, Brave Heart exercises his rule bringing order, love and peace among the people in the cities that were assigned to him. He

counsels and rules over them daily through his spirit. Since Satan is no longer on the earth to deceive and promote evil, there is peace and harmony among the nations. The twelve tribes of Israel increase and multiply throughout the years and although there is peace among the nations, sin remains a factor among the people. Some choose to believe in the Lord and others do not. Therefore, God's final plan is yet to be carried out. He will release Satan once again after the thousand years is finished, and then, the final battle will take place.

(The above Prologue Presentation will be continued in Chapter 4)

What an awesome and glorifying picture this presents for those Christians who overcome, but what a horror for Israel and the Gentiles to be present in the midst of the Great Tribulation on earth. A *greater* tragedy is the reality that many Christians will be faced with on that Day in heaven—the fact that those who are deemed unworthy (non-overcomers) will face God's disapproval and judgment by being placed in outer darkness for one thousand years!

However, these unworthy servants will not be left outside forever. After one thousand years, the light will appear again, their bands will be loosed and life will resume, but they will have missed the joyous wedding festivities forever.

Psalm 88:12-14 reflects the plea of these unworthy servants while they remain in darkness:

Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

But to You I have cried out, O Lord, and in the morning my prayer comes before You.

Lord, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?

Contrary to what many theologians teach today, Scripture clearly reveals that there will be a *“just recompense of reward.”* Each and every Christian will receive a just payment comparable to whatever services he rendered or failed to render to the Lord during his mortal life. And this

means that there will be rewards and losses, depending on determinations made at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”
(Matthew 16:26, 27)

Paul spoke of the goal of receiving a prize from God for winning the race. The prize is the reward for victory. What is the prize? The prize is the *upward call* to enter the kingdom in glory. The prize then is ruling and reigning with Christ Jesus in the kingdom of heaven. Paul does not say that he is pressing on for the call of God but rather for the *prize of that higher calling*. This prize is determined at the Judgment seat of Christ, which is the place of reward.

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **(Philippians 3:14)**

Paul gave his entire life to Christ and his goal was to be prepared for the Judgment seat so that he would be able to enter the future kingdom. He referred to this goal as running a race, the race for the crown.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. **(1 Corinthians 9:24)**

What does it take to win a race in any sport?

- 1) A passion for the sport (passion for the Word of the kingdom)
- 2) Dedication to train for the game (the race of the faith)

- 3) A burning desire to win the prize (the upward call to enter the kingdom; the hope of glory)

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he drew a comparison between the Christian life and a sport's competition. He knew that if he faithfully completed his Christian life, he would receive a reward from the Lord, an imperishable crown for his service. Paul provides an example of the champion-mindset required to win the race:

Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

(1 Corinthians 9:26)

Paul did not run the race with uncertainty; he knew exactly what his goal was and he understood how to achieve victory. Like an athlete preparing for a race, he also had to discipline his body [sacrifice his fleshly desires] daily in order to allow the Spirit to successfully work through him. Paul did not assume that he would win, so he continued to discipline himself, to motivate himself, to strive for the crown. And this is what it takes for every Christian to win the prize — the saving of his soul.

...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.... **(Hebrews 12:1b, 2a)**

At the time of Paul's death, he knew that he had lived for Christ, had kept the faith and that he would receive the reward.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. **(2 Timothy 4:7, 8)**

The Greek word for *reward* is “*misthos*” (Strong's #G3408) meaning “a payment for service or wages,” good or bad. Therefore, a Christian's reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ will depend on his service during

his mortal life. Good works done according to the Holy Spirit will earn a good reward; however, bad works done in the flesh earn a bad reward, which is actually a loss of reward. Throughout Scripture, God reveals that He will distribute these wages at the Judgment Seat of Christ and that they will commensurate according to His children's labor.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1)

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." (Revelation 22:12)

All Christians will receive their due reward, whether good or bad, depending on their deeds during their lifetime.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. (1 Corinthians 3:8)

There will be different levels of reward given and there will be up to five crowns that will be placed on the overcoming Christian, depending on his works. In recalling Brave Heart's victory, his earning of three crowns as a result of decisions and determinations made by Christ at His judgment seat was awarded for his faithfulness during his mortal life and assured him participation during Christ's millennial kingdom.

During the Millennium, there will be a complete restructuring of authority in both regions of the kingdom, in heaven and on earth. Brave Heart, who is part of the bride of Christ, will be ruling over the Gentile nations of the earth from his heavenly position. The twelve apostles and some of the Old Testament saints will be ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel also from their heavenly position. Remember the martyrs who came out of the Great Tribulation? They also will rule and reign in the heavenly kingdom over the nations on earth during the Millennium.

The crowns of rulership will be received by the bride from the Lord when He returns from His battle on the earth. The Lord will take His diadems (ruling crowns) by force from Satan and then He will begin His reign. The crowns for the bride mentioned in Scripture are *stephanos*, which

means “crowns of royalty, or a prize.” These crowns will be willingly given up by the twenty-four elders [the angels who did not fall with Satan] at the throne of God and will be given to the bride of Christ. Believers desiring to be a part of the bride of Christ are to work for the following crowns:

The Crown of Life: This crown will be given to the believer who endures trials and temptation throughout his life on earth. By remaining patient and faithful through tribulation until death or rapture, the believer will overcome and win the crown of life. God allows trials to test the believer’s faith while here on earth in order that he may mature — that he *may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

The Crown of Glory: God guarantees Christians who minister the truth of the Word and who serve Him faithfully, not for monetary gain but freely, eagerly and in righteousness, that they will earn a crown of glory in Christ's coming kingdom.

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

and when the Chief Shepard appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

The silver-haired head (mature Christian in the Word) is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness. (Proverbs 16:31)

The Crown of Righteousness: This victory crown will be given to believers who ran *righteously* during the race of the faith throughout their mortal lives. These believers have looked forward to the prize (entrance into the kingdom) at the end of the race. The goal (to win the race) produces a love for Christ's appearance in the clouds (**1 Thessalonians 4:13ff**). Those who love and eagerly hope for His appearing are those Christians who have a mature knowledge of the Word of the kingdom and who die daily to self in order to attain righteousness. They have kept the faith and finished the race.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day,

and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.
(**2 Timothy 4:7, 8**)

The Crown of Rejoicing: This crown will be given to believers who share the knowledge of Christ's return with other Christians, who then may lead them to a life of faithfulness, eagerly waiting for the Lord. Christians who thus share this mature knowledge of the Word are true *soul-winners*.

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

For you are our glory and joy. (**1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20**)

In **1 Thessalonians 2:19**, Paul joyfully hopes that he, along with his brothers and sisters in Christ, will have their souls saved and receive the crown of rejoicing at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern...

For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. (Philippians 3:17, 20-4:1)

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19)

...And he who wins souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)

The Incorruptible Crown: This crown is awarded to overcomers who will have disciplined their bodies of flesh, bringing them into subjection, so that they may overcome their evilness and unrighteousness during their mortal lives. Striving to be Christ-like, overcoming the body of flesh, the devil and the world during the believer's mortal life will qualify him for this crown, which will attest to the believer's resurrected body being enswathed in glory.

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we for an imperishable [incorruptible] crown.

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)

In **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three**, the following rewards are promised to overcomers at the Judgment seat of Christ:

The Tree of Life: During the Millennium, the tree of life will be in the midst of the Paradise of God. It was originally placed in the midst of the Garden of Eden, and was a tree from which Adam and Eve could eat. There were two trees specifically mentioned in the Garden—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Both trees were located in the Garden and both produced fruit. The distinction between them was the consequence of eating from them.

The tree of life produced life having to do with rulership and the other produced death. Eating from the tree of life had nothing to do with remaining immortal, for Adam and Eve already possessed immortality from the beginning of their creation, even before the tree of life was offered to them. The tree of life was offered to provide them the wisdom of God to be able to rule over the earth. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was more closely aligned with Satan, who became wise in his own eyes rather than being mindful of the things of God. Therefore, at the judgment seat, Christians who have overcome during their mortal lives will be given access to the tree of life, providing them the wisdom of God and the ability to rule the earth.

“...To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7b)

In **Proverbs 3:18-22a**, the Spirit of wisdom is connected to the tree of life. Overcomers who are provided nutrition from the tree of life during the Messianic Era will have the wisdom of God with which to rule and reign with Christ.

She (wisdom) is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens;

By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew.

My son, let them not depart from your eyes--keep sound wisdom and discretion;

so they will be life to your soul... (Proverbs 3:18-22a)

Power over the nations: Only overcomers have the promise of being coheirs with Christ. They will be given power to rule and reign over the Gentile nations of the earth for one thousand years. They will be assigned certain cities to rule over, and those who are rewarded higher positions will be awarded more than others.

“And he who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--

He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels--” (Revelation 2:26, 27a)

The Morning Star: For the overcomers, Christ promises to give the morning star.

“...and I will give him the morning star.” (Revelation 2:28)

A “star” in Scripture may refer to angels (**Revelation 1:20**), to men (**Revelation 12:1**) or to Christ Himself (**Revelation 22:16**) in positions of authority. In this context, it is referring to the covering of glory that Christ possesses. When the rule over the earth is transferred from angels to men, overcomers will be in a position to possess the same covering of glory that enswathed Adam and Eve prior to their fall and that presently covers Christ Jesus.

During the Lord’s Day, the angels (those who did not fall with Satan) will willingly relinquish their crowns before the throne of God (**Revelation 4:10**); then Christ will be in a position to give overcomers the morning star (the covering of glory) in order that they may rule and reign with Him during the Messianic Era.

Christ’s glory is referred to as “the morning star” in **Revelation 2:28**, however we see in **Revelation 22:16**, Christ Himself is referred to as the Bright and Morning Star, the Head of glory.

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” (Revelation 22:16)

The “morning star” refers to the overcomer’s share in the glory of Christ during the kingdom age. Believers who overcome will shine brightly in the image and likeness of Christ, sharing in His royal splendor, as portrayed in **Daniel 12:3**:

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament,

And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Hidden Manna, White Stone and a New Name: All three of these are rewards that will be given to overcomers who lived by faith during their mortal lives. The hidden manna was the food from heaven given to sustain Israel in the wilderness. The hidden manna for overcomers during the Messianic Era will be a much better banquet. It will provide a special intimacy with Christ and a supernatural sustenance to enable the overcomers to serve God effectively as co-rulers in Christ's kingdom. The white stone will be given as a symbol of victory for the overcomer who is indeed victorious in his race of the faith. Along with this, a new name [such as Brave Heart] will be given, which will identify the overcomer's distinctive character. This new name will not be known to anyone except to the overcomer who receives it and the Lord Himself who gives it, indicating the special relationship between the two.

“...To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”
(Revelation 2:17b)

White Garment, Book of Life, and Confession of one's name before the Father and His angels: The overcomer will wear a white linen garment before entering the wedding banquet. It symbolizes the overcomer's righteous acts and faithful service to the Lord during his mortal life, allowing him entrance into the kingdom as part of the bride of Christ. The overcomer's name is promised to be in the Book of Life, which pertains to the salvation of the soul, where the overcomer's name and works will not be erased, but remembered and honored. And Christ will honor overcomers by confessing their names before His Father and His Father's angels.

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” **(Revelation 3:5)**

Pillar in the Temple of God, and the Names of God, the New Jerusalem and Christ's New Name: For the overcomer, Christ Jesus

will place him in a high position in God's presence and write on him three names: the name of God, the city of God, and Jesus' new name, all three recognizing the overcomer's ownership, citizenship, and his association with the ultimate rulers and the governing center of the heavens and earth.

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” (Revelation 3:12)

Sit with Me on My throne: The Lord promises to share His throne with the overcomers. Those who share Christ's sufferings while on Earth will experience a victory similar to His in the future. As we see in **1 Peter 1:11b**, suffering precedes glory:

...the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Just as Christ suffered and overcame in order to sit down with the Father on His throne, Christians who faithfully endure through their suffering will likewise be granted permission to sit with Christ on His throne.

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

In light of the splendor and glory that awaits those who overcome, we must realize that now is the time to take His Word seriously and devote our lives to Him. If we do, we will never regret it, for we will know that what He offers is far greater than what the world offers. Even though we are in this world, we are not to be a part of this world. We are to eagerly wait for our true citizenship, which is in Christ's heavenly kingdom.

Scripture indicates that there will be Christians, some of whom may be scholars, teachers and leaders, who seek entrance into the kingdom on their own merit and terms. They take pride in their work and are exalted and honored by man; but at the Judgment Seat of Christ, their works will be consumed in the fire because they were done in the flesh and not in the

power of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, there will be those who will enter the kingdom to the great surprise of many. These will be humble men and women who did not have great titles or positions on Earth, they were not well-known; but their works will be sustained through the fire and be acceptable to God (**1 Corinthians 3:11-15**).

But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (Matthew 19:30)

Contrary to popular conservative theology, not all Christians will be crowned at the Judgment seat. Unfaithful Christians will experience great loss during the Millennium.

If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss... (1 Corinthians 3:14, 15)

The Greek word for “loss” (Strong’s #G2210) is *zemioo* and means “to injure, to experience detriment: be cast away, receive damage, suffer loss,” which in this case is “the loss of one’s soul [life].” This refers to a separation from Christ, which is inextricably linked with one’s experiences of joy, peace, love, intimacy, wisdom, and spiritual fulfillment during the Millennium.

This loss is portrayed by Christ as He articulated the account of the “unprofitable servant” (**Matthew 25:30**) who was cast into *outer darkness*, still in heaven, but in obscurity just outside the glory of the kingdom. He will be separated from Christ and will not experience any of the joy and fulfillment of reigning in the kingdom. The expression “*outer darkness*” is used only three times in the Gospel of **Matthew (verses 8:12; 22:13; 25:30)**, and simply means “into the darkness, the outer.” It describes a place of darkness outside of the light of the heavenly kingdom, the conditions in an area apart from the wedding festivities of the bride and Bridegroom.

Just as there will be different levels of rewards at the judgment seat, there will also be different levels of punishment. In the parable of the faithful servant and the evil servant in **Luke 12:35-48**, a word-picture is presented of the Judgment Seat of Christ showing different degrees of punishment for those servants who failed to prepare for the Lord.

“But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,

the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” (Luke 12:45-48)

The first servant is consciously a wicked man, an apostate teacher, acting as a servant of the devil rather than of the Lord, as he treated the Lord’s return carelessly and misleadingly. At the Judgment Seat, he will be slain, indicating the severity of this judgment, especially in contrast to the following servants. The Lord orders the second servant to be beaten with many stripes, for even though he knew the Lord’s will, he did not prepare himself or follow His will – he produced no fruit. The third servant is beaten with few stripes even though he did not know God’s will, because his actions still merited stripes, for he did not seek the Lord’s will.

This parable suggests degrees of God’s punishment. In each case, the stewardship of the servant is evaluated. The ignorant are disciplined less and are cast to the outer darkness unbound (**Luke 12:48; Matthew 25:28-30**) ; the wise but disobedient are disciplined moderately and are also cast to the outer darkness but are bound hand and feet (**Luke 12:47; Matthew 22:13**); and the blatantly disobedient are slain (**Luke 12:45; 19:27; Matthew 24:51**) with their portion being appointed with those who are unbelievers of the Word of the kingdom and hypocrites. All three types of Christians will have forfeited their inheritance and be cast out of the kingdom.

The *blackness of darkness*, also known as *Gehenna*, will be located outside of the kingdom, where darkness will be far greater and punishment will be administered most severely (**Jude 10-13; 2 Peter 2:17**). This

region is set aside for apostate Christians, many who are false teachers, who have fallen away from the faith and speak against the Word of God. Many of these false teachers will deny Christ and the kingdom to come. “Apostasy” means *falling away* (Strong’s #G646); *defection from truth; to forsake God*. These false teachers are not unsaved individuals, but Christians who have rebelled against God’s Word; and, as a result, will be overcome in the blackness of darkness (Gehenna) for one thousand years.

But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 10-13; cf. James 3:1-6).

“*For they have gone in the way of Cain*” (Jude 11) illustrates the practice and teaching that one can obtain soul-salvation by one’s own works (works of the flesh) instead of works of the Spirit. This is what Cain did by bringing an incorrect offering, an offering not in accordance with God’s command. Both were to bring a “first-fruit” or “firstborn” offering to the Lord. Abel’s offering was a sacrifice of “*the firstborn of his flock and of their fat*” (Genesis 4:4). His sacrifice was acceptable to God because of His faithful obedience, and he was therefore declared righteous (Hebrews 11:4). Cain, however, offered his sacrifice apart from faith, without following God’s instructions. This illustration deals with the salvation of the soul, which requires one to follow God by faith; i.e., simply believing what God has said pertaining to a matter and faithfully obeying His Word. In doing so, the result will be works executed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Like Cain, many Christians today are deceived into thinking that their own works are pleasing to the Lord and will be found worthy. Therefore, they involve themselves in helping and caring for other's physical needs *without* providing for their spiritual needs, which results in them executing fleshly works rather than divine good works acceptable to God. Many Christians are devoted and preoccupied with their own works, but fail to be obedient in more significant matters, such as ensuring that they are providing spiritual food so that others may gain life in the age to come. This they should have done, without leaving the others undone. (**Matthew 7:21-27; 23:23; Luke 9:59-62; 1Timothy 4:6-11**)

Many pastor-teachers are deceived into thinking that the busyness of their man-made programs, and the ideology presented in their preaching (false doctrine) are pleasing to the Lord. Like Cain, they will be rejected. An example can be seen in **Matthew 7:21-23**.

In addition, these apostate teachers then commit "*the error of Balaam for reward*." This simply means the selling of their ministry for monetary gain. This is the error of many modern day churches and ministries. Their emphasis is upon numbers of "converts," resulting in monetary gain. They use God's Word to draw them in, speaking great swelling words to those who have "*itching ears*," as they constantly appeal for additional funds.

From "*the error of Balaam*," they continue in their false teaching until "*they perish in the rebellion of Korah*." Korah was a mighty man of the Levites and was brought near to the Lord to serve in His tabernacle. But Korah had higher ambitions as he wanted to take over the position of high priest from Aaron and the leadership position from Moses. His arrogance pitted him against Moses and against God's Word. As a result, the earth opened up and swallowed him and his followers alive into the pit, the heart of the earth.

And just as it happened to Korah and his followers, so it will happen to all apostate teachers as they will be slain and cast to Gehenna, the region known as the blackness of darkness.

What is Gehenna? *Gehenna* translated "*hell—age-lasting punishment*" (G1067) was a garbage dump outside the southern wall of Jerusalem. It is known in the Old Testament as the "Valley of the son of Hinnom," the

place where God said He would destroy apostates of His own people Israel. It was here that the people of Judah fell away from God and sacrificed their children as burnt offerings to the god, Baal.

Later, when this valley was demolished, it became a garbage dump where the fires never went out and the worm never dies (**Jeremiah 19:1-19**). In the future, the Lord will slay the apostates and cast them into Gehenna. During the Messianic Era, all will come to worship before the Lord and they will be able to look upon the corpses of these men who have transgressed against Him (**Isaiah 66:23, 24**). It is this same Valley of Hinnom (*Gehenna or Hell*) that Jesus used as a type to warn Christians concerning God's coming judgment (**Mark 9:42-48**).

In the Book of **Mark**, Jesus warns His disciples about false teachings:

“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell (Gehenna), into the fire that shall never be quenched --- where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' (Mark 9:42-44)

God uses types (examples that picture the reality) and their antitypes (the reality itself) throughout His Word. The Valley of the sons of Hinnom (Gehenna) was used as a type for that which would portray the future judgment of apostate Christians — the antitype of which is *the lake of fire*.

The term “*the second death*” is mentioned in the Letter to the Church in Smyrna in **Revelation 2:11**. This expression appears only four times in Scripture, all in the Book of **Revelation (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8)**. The “*second death*” is used in connection with the lake of fire (**Revelation 21:8b**). In **Revelation 20:14**, this expression is associated with the unsaved; but, in the other three passages, it is contextually used pertaining to those who are saved. God prepared the lake of fire following the fall of Satan and a third of the angels who followed him (**Matthew 25:41**), a fall having to do with his arrogant quest for usurping the throne of God — thus, having to do with regality. It will be a permanent abode for all who

have refused Christ and His sacrifice at Calvary for their eternal salvation. It will also be the Millennial abode for the saved, those with saved spirits but who have rejected God's plan for the salvation of their souls, a plan having to do with their future regality during the Messianic Era. Therefore, the "*second death*" in the "*lake of fire*" will be assigned to fallen man — both the saved and unsaved.

Following determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ, blatantly evil, non-overcoming Christians and apostates will be hurt by the "*second death*" and be cast to the "*lake of fire*" **during** the Millennium. At the end of the Tribulation, they will be joined by the beast and the false prophet. Unsaved mankind, after facing the Lord at the Great White throne judgment, will be permanently hurt by the "*second death*" in the "*lake of fire*" **after** the Millennium.

Every man will be resurrected in his own company and be judged in his own company. Saved and unsaved man therefore will form separate companies and will be judged at different times. The judgment of the saved will transpire prior to the Messianic Era, while the judgment of the unsaved will be at the Great White Throne of God at the end of the Messianic Era, but previous to the opening of the Eternal Ages.

In **Matthew 25:31-46**, Christ reveals the judgment of the "nations" (living Gentiles) at the time of His return immediately following the Tribulation. Christ judges and separates them into two groups —the sheep and the goats. Since He will be judging both of them at the same time, it is obvious that both belong to the same "class," *saved* individuals who will come out of the Tribulation. The "*sheep*" are allowed to "*inherit the kingdom*" but not so with the "*goats.*" The goats on the left are cast to the "*everlasting* [Greek: *aionian*, actually age-lasting i.e. millennial] *fire*" that has been prepared for the devil and his angels (**vv. 34, 41**). This judgment of the "*goats*" has nothing to do with eternal verities, but with millennial verities — *the thousand year reign of Christ*.

Experiencing the *second death for the saved* will be experiencing the death of their souls, being cast into the lake of fire during the kingdom age — for one thousand years.

The *second death for the unsaved* will be experiencing death and being cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the Eternal Ages — forever.

Our first death relates to the death of the spirit in Adam, since all of mankind is *born dead in trespasses and sin*. But for redeemed man, who is made alive in the spirit, the second death is an entirely different manner. Redeemed man is no longer associated with Adam and the possibility of him being hurt by the second death will be a different matter from that of unredeemed man. Experiencing the second death for a redeemed person will affect his inheritance into the kingdom during the Messianic Era; this for failing to recognize and realize his calling; but this judgment will *not* affect his eternal salvation during the Eternal Ages which will follow. On the other hand, for unredeemed man, the second death can only relate to his eternal damnation throughout the Eternal Ages, since, because of his rejection of Christ, his spirit has never been made alive, but remains *dead in trespasses and sin*.

For the non-overcoming Christian, whether he is cast into outer darkness, blackness of darkness or Gehenna, furnace of fire or lake of fire (*all referring to a region outside of the kingdom with different degrees of punishment*), the age to come will be a dreadful and sorrowful time. The non-overcomer will not be in the presence of the Lord nor will he possess the glory of the Lord, as we see noted in **2 Thessalonians 1:9**:

These (non-overcomers) shall be punished with everlasting (age-lasting) destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe (belief in the coming kingdom), because our testimony among you was believed.

Although this *just recompense* is not forever, it *will* last one thousand years. I am sure that we can agree it is not a place we want to be. Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things that we have just read.

Anything that we gain in this world for ourselves (fleshly desires) is temporary and profits nothing, but will only bring destruction. We are taught by the world that our value should be based on self-achievements. God says this is vanity and chasing after the wind. However, what you do in this world for the glory of God will profit you a hundredfold in the coming age, the Messianic Era. It is not too late to renew our minds and adjust our lives for God, but it will be too late when we appear before the

Judgment Seat of Christ. And the time is close at hand.

And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and the Last. (Revelation 22:12, 13)

CHAPTER THREE – PART THREE

BRIDE OF CHRIST

The Holy Spirit is presently in the world seeking a bride for God’s Son, Christ, as the Head, and His bride (those who are judged as *overcomers*, who have been *called out* from the Church [all Christians] at the Judgment seat of Christ) who will occupy various positions of power and authority in the kingdom of the heavens, will replace the present rulers of the earth, Satan and his angels.

This mystery is presently being made known to Christians by the Holy Spirit, the One who dwells in them (**John 14:16, 17; 16:7-15**); and this mystery is also being made known to Satan and his angels by the Church (**Ephesians 3:9-11**). A “mystery” in Scripture always relates to something made known in the Old Testament but not fully opened up and revealed until the matter had been handled and manifested at a later time in the New Testament. There is *nothing* in the New Testament that is not seen in the Old Testament.

And because Satan is aware of this “mystery” concerning the Church replacing him as ruler, we are warned in the Scriptures of the spiritual warfare that surrounds us. For this reason, we must constantly utilize the whole armor of God so that we are able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The manner in which God has put matters together in His Word, making His plans and purposes known to man, is through the use of people and events from the Old Testament as examples to point to events that will occur in the age to come.

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

The Old Testament has numerous types, examples that present the bride of Christ. The Old Testament types parallel antitypes, which are found in the New Testament; both being in perfect agreement and forming a pictorial representation of the bride of Christ.

One of the Old Testament types is Abraham. Following the word-picture of his willful offering of his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to the Lord (a type of God's future sacrificial offering of Christ at Calvary), and after the death of his previously unfruitful wife, Sarah (a type of Israel's unfruitful condition due to their unbelief concerning the offer of the kingdom, being set aside as a nation, considered "dead" because of the people's hardened hearts), Abraham sent his oldest servant into Mesopotamia to procure a bride for his son from among Abraham's family (**Genesis 22-24**).

The events that occurred between Abraham, his servant, and his son mirror the New Testament antitype of God sending the Holy Spirit into the world to procure a bride from among His family for His Son, Jesus Christ, a search that will last two thousand years, from Pentecost to the rapture.

So Abraham said to the eldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please put your hand under my thigh,

and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom you dwell, but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"

But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there.

The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying,

'To your descendant I give this land.' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there."
(Genesis 24:2-8)

God placed the Holy Spirit in charge of all His possessions prior to sending Him to earth. And for the same reason as Abraham, God sent the Holy Spirit with specific instructions to procure a bride for His Son from among those within the family of God -- saved individuals. Only from among Christians can the Holy Spirit select those who are qualified to become the bride of Christ. Those so elected will be chosen out from the Church, the body of Christ. To be clear, not all of the Church will be elected, but only those who are faithful and obedient to God's Word.

Once in Mesopotamia, the servant of Abraham found the person who met the requirements to be Isaac's bride, who was Rebekah. After he found Rebekah, he told her the purpose of his journey (to procure a bride for his master's son, who would inherit with the son) and gave her some of Abraham's goods. Then, the following was asked of Rebekah:

"Will you go with this man? And she said, "I will go." (Genesis 24:58)

The search for and the selection of the bride is being performed by the Holy Spirit today. The Holy Spirit reveals God's possessions contained within His Word to those Christians who are willing to receive them. During the soon-coming Messianic Era, the possessions of ruling and reigning in the kingdom will be the staple of Christ and His bride. In order to qualify for participation as part of the bride, a Christian must accept the invitation, be determined to make the journey to meet her Bridegroom, and demonstrate this by faithful obedience to God's Word during his lifetime.

In the type, Abraham's servant was to remain in Mesopotamia only until he had procured a wife for Isaac. Once he had found the bride, he was to leave in order to present the bride to the son. Then his mission would be completed. This, in turn, would bring the whole matter to a full end of that which is in view — *the son possessing a bride who would inherit with him; and the father possessing a wife again who, unlike his former wife, would be fruitful.* After the marriage of his son, Abraham remarries a Jewish woman, Keturah. After the bride has been chosen at the Judgment seat of Christ, God's wife Israel will be restored to her land and a re-marriage will take place.

The order in which the type presents the whole matter — beginning with

the offering of the son, then the death of the father's wife, then the search for a bride for his son, and ending with the son's marriage and the father's remarriage — is the same that must be seen in the antitype.

In the antitype, corresponding events can be seen with the offering of the Son on the Cross at Calvary. Israel's rejection of Christ and the offer of the kingdom resulted in the nation being set aside, which typifies their present condition as God's wife being in a state of death. The Holy Spirit then executes the search for a bride for God's Son from among the Church (the family of God). At the allotted time, the bride will be chosen and the marriage will be consummated bringing in the Sabbath. And it will be at this time that God the Father will again be the husband of Israel, and she will be fruitful by preaching God's word to the ends of the earth in the age to come.

Why such an emphasis on searching for a bride? There is an emphasis of this nature in the type (with Isaac and Rebekah) because of that which was revealed and willed by God to the first Adam, who had been created to rule and reign. Man was not to rule alone. He was given a bride to rule with him so that he would be able to rule as a complete being — as man and wife are "*one flesh*" (**Genesis 2:24**). In the beginning, God said of Adam and his wife together, "*....let them have dominion*" (**Genesis 1:26-28**).

The exercise of rulership must be fulfilled by a husband in conjunction with his wife. They must rule together as one complete person, with the man as the head of the wife. In the Old Testament, this is the reason why God chose Israel as His wife to rule with Him in the kingdom of men. He was setting the example of the very thing He Himself established when he created man. And the same thing must hold true for God's Son. Christ must also have a wife to rule with Him for exactly the same reason; the principle set forth in **Genesis 1:26-28** "*....let them have dominion.*"

Another example set forth in the New Testament concerning the bride of Christ is revealed in the Parable of the Wedding Feast, seen in both **Matthew 22:1-14** and **Luke 14:15-24**.

As previously stated, a parable is a *truth* presented in story form that explains a previously revealed truth. When Jesus walked the earth, His central message was the offer of the heavenly kingdom. He begins the

parable by saying, " *The kingdom of heaven is like...*" Therefore, He is about to reveal a truth concerning the kingdom of heaven (lit: the kingdom of the heavens).

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,

and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. (Matthew 22:2, 3)

The "certain king" is God the Father who is looking for a bride for his son, Jesus Christ. He sent out His servants (the apostles) to invite Israel to the wedding feast (entrance into the kingdom of heaven), but they refused the invitation, which typified Israel's rejection of Christ and the kingdom, their unfaithfulness to God, and their refusal of God's inheritance.

Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. (Matthew 22:4, 5)

The kingdom of heaven was offered to Israel a second time by the apostles, but again Israel refused and "*made light of it*" meaning it was of little importance to them.

And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (Matthew 22:6, 7)

For forty years following Pentecost, the apostles continued to offer the message of the kingdom to Israel. Yet Israel and their leaders not only rejected the message, but treated the apostles unjustly, sent them to prison, and forbade them to speak of Jesus and the kingdom. Many were persecuted, as was Stephen, who was falsely accused of blaspheming God. He was cast out of the city and stoned to death.

When they [Israel's religious leaders] heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him (Stephen) with their teeth.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,

and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;

and they cast him out of the city and stoned him...

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep [died]. (Acts 7:54-60)

As a result, God became angry at Israel and sent His armies to destroy them and burn their city. In 63 A.D., the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was no longer offered to Israel but was given to another nation (the Church) who would receive the message and bear fruit (**Acts 15:14-17; 28:28**). In 70 A.D., the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem, causing the nation of Israel to be scattered throughout the world.

A picture of Israel's rejection of the offer of the heavenly aspect of the kingdom can be seen in **Matthew 22:8**:

Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding."

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. (Matthew 22:8-10)

Israel had refused the invitation, therefore the offer was given to the Church and they had accepted His call (the same invitation to come to the wedding feast is being sent to all Christians today). So the servants went out into the highways, meaning out of Israel and into the Gentiles nations, and gathered together (raptured) all whom they found (all who were saved). In reference to “*both bad and good*,” this denotes all of the saved, whether they had good works or bad works. *All Christians* were gathered to the Judgment seat of Christ. Following decisions and determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ and prior to Christ’s return at the end of the Tribulation, the wedding is consummated and the hall is filled with participating guests, i.e. the bride.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

So he said to him, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:11-14)

The saved man was invited to the wedding, but he failed to prepare himself for it. He did not have on a wedding garment, which is the righteous acts of the saints [good works worthy of entering the kingdom]. The fact that he was in heaven and God called him “*friend*” clearly shows that he was spiritually saved, but he was judged and cast out into outer darkness. He had not lived a life comprised of good works and therefore his soul was not saved. This meant that he could not participate in the wedding feast nor be included as part of the bride of Christ.

All Christians are called to the wedding, but few will heed the call. Those who fail to prepare for the wedding will not be chosen as part of the bride of Christ. The “*called*” in Strong’s #2822 is the Greek word “*kletos*” and

is defined as “*invited – a saint*,” referring to all of the Church, all Christians. And following determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ yet future, only a selected few will be “*chosen*” or “*called out*” to enter the kingdom in glory during the Millennium.

The Greek compound word, *ekklesia*, from *ek* and *kaleo* (Strong’s #G1577) is translated “church” and means “*called out*.” The word is used in the New Testament to refer to “a calling out or chosen” from the Church; a special or particular assembly of believers. This denotes a future division amongst Christians. This event will occur when Christ deals with all Christians at His judgment seat. “*The called*” (the entire Church from Pentecost until the end of this age) will be present in that future day of the Lord. Following determinations at His judgment seat, “*the called out*” from “*the called*” will be the bride, overcomers who will be taken out of the Church and will be revealed as qualified participants to rule with Christ in the age to come.

The Old Testament type can be seen in **Genesis** chapter **two**, where the bride (Eve) for Adam (type of the New Testament antitype, i.e., Christ, the “Last Adam” [**Romans 5:14**; **1 Corinthians 15:45**]) is formed from a removed part of Adam’s body, a rib. The New Testament antitype will take place in that coming Day of Judgment when the bride of Christ will be taken from Christ’s body (the Church, all believers). All Christians form the body of Christ, but not all Christians will form the bride of Christ. Only those *resurrected out or called out* from the body of Christ can form the bride. Only those who compose the bride of Christ will be called first-born sons, referred to in **Hebrews 12:23** as the “*church of the firstborn*.”

The word “resurrection” in the New Testament, in all but one case, is the Greek translation for *anastasis*, meaning “to rise up; to stand up.” It means “to rise up from the place of death” and constitutes a bodily rise of all of the dead in Christ — both the overcomers and the non-overcomers. This resurrection is spoken of in **1 Corinthians 15:51-57** and **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

But one exception to the word “*resurrection*” relative to the Greek language is found in **Philippians 3:11**, where the Apostle Paul uses the Greek word *exanastasis* [ex-ana-stasis; *ex* (from *ek*)] meaning “out of.” And this combination changes the definition to mean “to stand up out of”

[lit., the out-resurrection from the (resurrected) dead], thereby denoting a further division within, and a further separation of, the resurrected dead in Christ.

This “out-resurrection” is connected with the “*prize of the upward call of God*” mentioned in **Philippians 3:14**. For a Christian to qualify for this out-resurrection he must be victorious in his race of faith during his mortal life. Achieving this will insure him the prize of the upward call. Non-overcomers will not be included in this out-resurrection. At the resurrection [*anastasis*], all who have believed in Christ, the body of Christ, will be separated from the unsaved. However, at the out-resurrection [*exanastasis*], which will follow determinations made at the Judgment seat of Christ, only Christians who qualify as overcomers will be chosen out from the body of Christ.

Christ paid the penalty for the sins of the *whole world* and because of His resurrection, every man who has died (saved or unsaved) will, at some point in the future, be raised from the dead to be judged according to their works. Everyone will be raised in his own order. Christians will be raised and judged in one order on the basis of works at a certain time before the Tribulation (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11; 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation 1-4**); Israel will be raised and judged in another order on the basis of works at a certain time following the Tribulation (**Ezekiel 20:34-38; 44:9-31; Daniel 12:1, 2**); saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation (including the martyrs -- Tribulation saints) will be raised and judged in another order on the basis of works at a certain time following the Tribulation (**Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:4-6**); and unsaved man, both from Man’s Day and the Lord’s Day, will be raised and judged in another order on the basis of works at a certain time following the Millennial reign of Christ (**Revelation 20:11-15**). And this perfect order is the way God has established the resurrection of the dead.

The present dispensation, which began on the day of Pentecost with the descent of the Holy Spirit, beginning with God’s work of searching for a bride through the Spirit, will last for a period of two thousand years. God is and has been dealing exclusively with the Church. God is not dealing with Israel or the Gentile nations today. And it is clear that we are very near the end of the allotted time for the Spirit to complete the procurement of a bride for God’s Son. And, at the conclusion of this period of time, all Christians will be raised to appear before the Judgment seat of Christ.

Then those who are found to be qualified to be part of the bride of Christ will be out-resurrected from the remaining body of Christ.

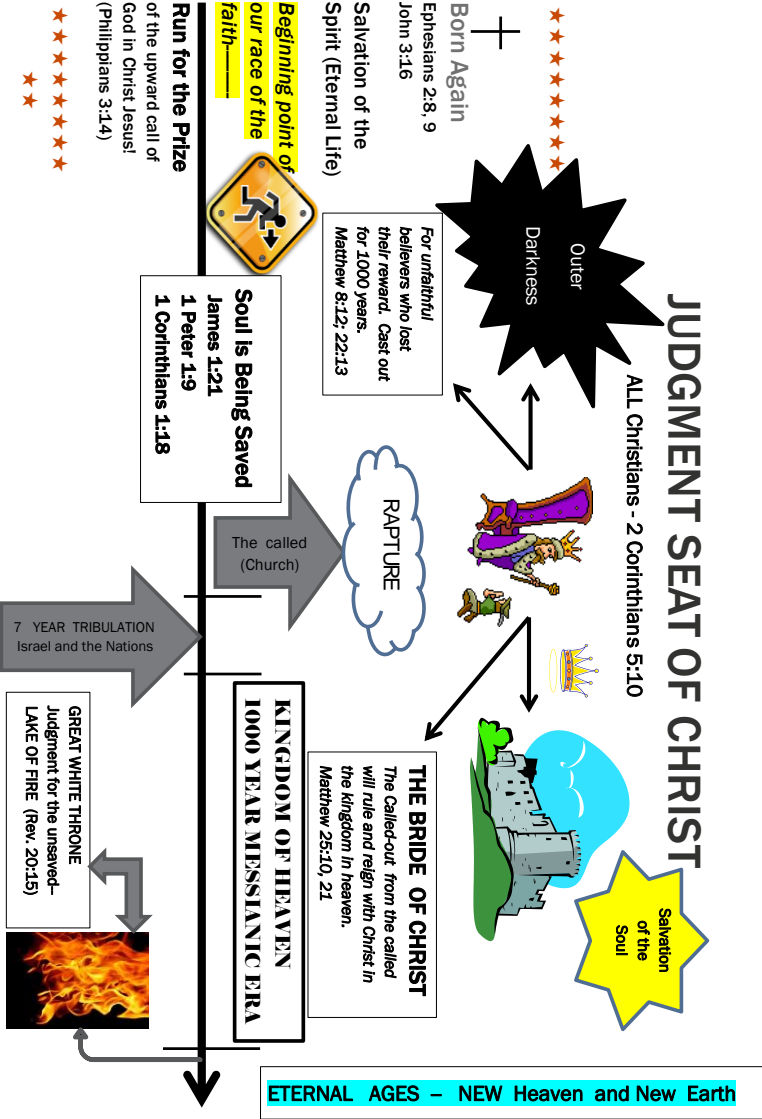
The work of the Spirit in procuring a bride for Christ, a unique work in this present dispensation, has nothing to do with His work in providing eternal salvation to those who believe in Christ. The Spirit has *always* been in the world performing the work of salvation by grace through faith. Since the fall of man, this has never changed. Eternal salvation was established from the beginning on the basis of *death and shed blood*.

Subsequent to imparting spiritual life in a person, the Spirit's work is to bring the believer to a state of being qualified as part of the bride of Christ. Yet, this can only be completed when the believer wills it to be done. When the believer is willing, the Spirit is then allowed to produce righteous acts through him, bringing him from immaturity to maturity so that he may realize the purpose of his salvation. The following are some definite conclusions pertaining to the Church and the bride of Christ:

1. The bride of Christ will be composed of a specific number of chosen ones from the Church. This group will be small in number compared to the total number of Christians.
2. Christians who make up the bride of Christ will be those chosen on the basis of their works, works done from a position of faithfulness and obedience to God and thereby achieving the salvation of their souls.
3. The bride of Christ will be co-heirs with Christ, ruling and reigning with Him from a heavenly position in His Millennial kingdom.
4. The terms "bride of Christ," "God's firstborn sons," "co-heirs with Christ," "Church of the firstborn," "a royal priesthood," all refer to the same group who will rule and reign with Christ Jesus during the Messianic Era --- faithful Christians.
5. The bride of Christ will be able to enter the kingdom and rule with Christ for one thousand years. The remaining body of Christ (Church) will not be permitted to enter the kingdom, but will be cast out during this time.

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

ALL Christians - 2 Corinthians 5:10



CHAPTER FOUR

TIMELINE OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

Introduction

Why study prophecy? In **Matthew 4:4 (Deuteronomy 8:3c)**, our Lord Jesus Christ said that man shall live by *every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God. The entire Word of God centers on Christ, His return and the establishment of His kingdom. The prophecies from the Old and New Testament (a detailed view in the Book of **Revelation**), reveals God's ultimate plan and His perfect will for man. What could be more important?

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it, for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:3)

God says that individuals who study, understand and retain prophecy will be blessed. It is by and through the study of prophecy that one can realize that the time of His return is near and in turn be prepared. In this, one will be blessed with an abundant entrance into the kingdom of the heavens.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came from the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

Prophecy in the Word will continue to point to the source of all truth — Christ — until He returns in glory. Prophecy is the Light which God has given us as a guide in this time of darkness. When Jesus walked the earth, He spoke repeatedly of His second coming and His future Millennial kingdom. We see this in all four of the Gospels. Therefore, I believe this is of *great* importance for Christians to know, otherwise Christ would not have mentioned it *so many times*.

One reason to study prophecy is so that we can know the approximate time period of our Lord's return and in turn watch and be ready for His appearing. Christ loves us so much that He gave His Spirit and His Word, even sacrificed Himself for us, so that we will enter into the kingdom which He has prepared for those who love Him and long for His return. Although we will not know the exact day and hour of His return, we are given ample warning of the proximity of the close of this age to let us know that His return is near.

Therefore, when one says he is not interested in prophecy or in the Lord's return he is acknowledging that he has little interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when one says he does not believe in the Lord's return he is *denying* the Word of God. Because of the destructive work of the leaven throughout this dispensation, Satan has been successful in keeping the Word of the kingdom (the gospel of glory) from *ever being mentioned* in the Church. Many Churches today preach continually on salvation of the spirit (eternal salvation), of eternal damnation, baptisms, church programs, *of laying on hands, of the resurrection of the dead* (**Hebrews 6:1, 2**) and then stop there. The future Millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is completely neglected.

One cannot preach the gospel and leave out half of the good news! We must give the *whole counsel* of God, both the gospel of grace and the gospel of glory. Leaving out the gospel of glory will not only produce much confusion in the Scriptures, but it will also exclude the Christian's purpose and hope.

At Christ's great commission, He came to His disciples (which extends to all Christians) and spoke to them, saying,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
(Matthew 28:19)

This is a commandment to *all* servants of God, then and now. Making disciples involves three steps:

- 1) Ministering the gospel of Christ to all peoples of all nations

- 2) Baptizing them (an acknowledgment of the birth from above)
- 3) Teaching them to observe *all things* that Jesus had taught and commanded

What did Jesus teach and command? Primarily, He taught “the Gospel of the kingdom” (**Matthew 4:23; Acts 1:1-3**). In the Book of **Matthew** alone, the word “kingdom” appears over forty times. Christians are *commanded* to make disciples of other Christians, which involves teaching them all things concerning His coming kingdom and how to participate in it. In **Amos 3:7**, Scripture says:

"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

This means that God has revealed all prophecy to the Old Testament prophets, His servants. Through the study of prophecy in His Word we will know all truth, and know His plan and purpose for the ages.

Is this world coming to an end? What does the future hold? What is going to happen next? There is order in the plans and purposes of God (**1 Corinthians 14:40**); and Scripture seems to point to the next prophetic event --- the removal of the Church.

In the beginning God created two realms, *the heavens and the earth*. (**Genesis 1:1**). And God rules from the heavens over the earth. (**Psalms 103:19-22**). The phrase, “*the heavens rule*” in **Daniel 4:26** refer to God’s rule over His entire kingdom and to the rule of messianic angels whom He has placed over provinces in His kingdom (**Psalms 103:20-22; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12**). And the angel in which God anointed as His cherub to rule under Him was Lucifer (after his fall, he was known as “Satan”), a position that presently continues to be occupied by him over the province in which man resides (**Job 1:6; 2:1; Isaiah 14:13; Ezekiel 28:14**) until he is brought down in the future. God did not plan for angels to rule forever, this was God’s plan for man, “the first man, the Last Man --- the first Adam, the Last Adam.” (**Hebrews 1:1-14**). This plan of government *from the heavens over the earth* was designed for Christ and His co-heirs, Christ being the Head, the King of kings and God’s firstborn begotten Son. (**2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7; John 3:16; Hebrews 1:5, 6**) “Sonship” implies *rulership*; only “sons” can occupy regal positions in

God's kingdom and only "sons" have rights to an inheritance – as in the examples of Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers).

These two realms (the heavens and the earth) formed two realms within a theocracy in which man was to ultimately rule. Man had been created in the beginning to rule the earth in the stead of the incumbent ruler, Satan (**Genesis 1:26-28**); and Satan's rule at that time, which continues today, was from *a heavenly realm over the earth*. (**Ephesians 6:12**) Thus, in order for man/Man to occupy the position created for him/Him, he/He will have to reside in both realms of the kingdom – *heavenly and earthly*.

Since the fall of Adam, God's redemptive plan for man has been in effect. God will redeem His people back to the position for which they were originally created, but they have to desire it and work for it. Man has a choice. We should take into account what happened to Jacob (Brave Heart) and the unprofitable servant. Each received their just payment for their decision and service to the Lord. Consider what your decision is for the Lord. Consider that Day when you will stand face to face with our Lord Jesus Christ.

As one looks at the structure of the Bible, it is clear to see that it has a beginning and an end, with different time periods and dispensations (**Ephesians 1:10; 3:2**). The word *dispensation* is the Greek word *oikonomia* (Strong's #G3622) meaning "administration (of a household); specifically an economy or stewardship." *A dispensation is an administration or a stewardship within a period of time during which God is allowing man to be tested in order to determine his ability to rule the earth.*

Within each dispensation or stewardship (meaning *house management*), God governed His people differently. For example, God's dealings with the Jews are very different from His dealings with the Gentiles and both of these are dealt with differently than the Church. For instance, the laws and orders of worship for the Jews are separate and distinct and do not apply to the Church. Also, God's dealings with man after Pentecost, with the gift of the Spirit, are different from His dealings with man before Pentecost. Therefore, according to the Scriptures, the Lord administered different messages to different groups (Jews, Gentiles and Christians) in three periods of time.

Scripture divides the human race into three separate and distinct groups of individuals, forming three creations – Jews, Gentiles, and the Church, i.e. Christians. (**1 Corinthians 10:32**)

Within these three creative acts of God, there are three dispensations consisting of 2000 years each which complete 6,000 years of the history of man known as Man's Day, from Adam to the removal of the Church. And within these three dispensations covering 6,000 years of Man's Day, it completes *one age*.

The word *age* is the Greek word *aion* (Strong's #G165) meaning “course, duration of time — past, present or future; by implication the *world* — the ages.” Scripture refers to only two periods of time or two ages that exist and it is presented within the six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest in **Genesis 1:1-2:3**. One age covers a period of six thousand years [Man's Day] and the other age covers a period of one thousand years [the Lord's Day], the Messianic Era. Within these two ages covering a span of 7000 years, there are four dispensations.

The first dispensation began with the creation of Adam and ended with the tower of Babel. Due to Adam's fall, man proved unfit to exercise dominion, and this dispensation ended in judgment, first with Adam & Eve being cast out of the Garden and then again with the descendants of Noah being scattered abroad over the face of the earth when they began to build the tower of Babel for their own glory, without the leadership of God. This dispensation involved God's dealings with all of mankind which ended in judgment.

After the fall of Adam, a division could be looked upon through viewing man as either saved or unsaved, for the first 2,000 years of human history. There was simply man in his fallen state (saved or unsaved) belonging to one creation, the only one that existed. But then, a new beginning is seen in the experiences of Noah immediately following the flood (**Genesis 9:1-13**), and this new beginning is dealt with more fully in the subsequent experiences of Abraham. (**Genesis 11:26-25:8**).

Each dispensation that followed thereafter ended in judgment. It is prophesied in the Scriptures that this current dispensation in which we live will end in judgment as well. And this judgment, for Israel and the Gentiles, will be composed of seven years of Tribulation on earth, such as

never before been seen. Immediately before this time of trouble on earth, Christians will be removed to face Christ at His judgment seat in heaven.

The second dispensation, known as the dispensation of law, began with a different approach regarding God's dealings with man for his redemption. God chose one individual, Abraham, to be the one in whom "a special people" (**Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 26:18; Psalm 135:4**) would form and would be favored with blessings. In turn, they were to be a blessing to all mankind. First, they would be the channel through which our Lord Jesus Christ would come (**2 Samuel 7:12, 13**). Second, they would be given the Word of God (**Romans 3:1, 2**). Third, they were to be God's witnesses to the ends of the earth (**Isaiah 43:9**).

Abraham obeyed God when he was called to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and go into another land, the land of Canaan "*which he would receive as an inheritance*" (**Genesis 11:31-12:5; 13:14-17; 15:18-21**). From the land of his birth He "*went out, not knowing where he was going,*" dwelling "*in tents with Isaac and Jacob [as pilgrims, yet to receive the inheritance (Genesis 37:1; Exodus 6:4)], the heirs with him of the same promise.*" And he "*looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (**Hebrews 11:8-10**).

Abraham was called to journey from one land to another, and he was to receive the land to which he had been called *for an inheritance*. For Abraham, the call was from one *earthly land* to another *earthly land*.

[But many Old Testament saints understood that there were two realms within an inheritance to be realized by Abraham and his seed — both *an earthly* and *a heavenly*. And many of these individuals, including Abraham, looked beyond *the earthly* land to *the heavenly* (**Hebrews 11:12-16**).]

The promise given to Abraham can be seen in **Genesis 22:17, 18**:

That in blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

In **Genesis 22:17, 18**, God refers to Abraham's descendants being looked upon in two realms: *as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore* (heavenly and earthly). The phrase *possessing the gate* refers to the manner in which the control of affairs would be taken from the enemy. It is only through a control of this nature in both realms, by the seed of Abraham, that the nations of the earth can (and will) be blessed (**Genesis 12:1-3**).

The nation of Israel (Jews) originated with Abraham, the father of the nation. From the birth of Abraham's son, Isaac, the Old Testament centers on one nation – the nation descending from Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Through Jacob, who became Israel, God created the existence of this special group known as the Jews. This special people are God's firstborn sons (**Exodus 4:22**).

And despite the Jews (Israel) continued disobedience towards God, they will *always* remain God's firstborn sons. God performed a special creative act in Abraham's grandson, Jacob. Through Jacob's descendants, God would bring His plans and purposes to pass. From Jacob's twelve sons sprang the twelve tribes of Israel, forming the nation through which God gave man the Redeemer, the written Word of God, and through which all blessings for mankind flow.

After the creation of Israel, the Gentiles came into existence, who would make up mankind from those who failed God before the call of Abraham. After the call of Abraham, they were considered “[spiritually] *dead in trespasses and sin*,” and were pagans, worshipping idols and false gods. The Gentiles were made up of those outside the seed of Abraham. Therefore, *Israel was chosen by God to be His own special people and to witness to the Gentiles*.

However, because of Israel's disobedience and unbelief, they failed in being God's witness to the Gentiles. Israel, for a time and to an extent, realized the earthly portion of this kingdom during Old Testament days. But because of the nation's continued disobedience, the theocracy was eventually brought to an end.

When Christ came the first time, He offered the heavenly realm of the kingdom — the kingdom of the heavens (**Matthew 4:17; 5:12; 10:7; 13:24, 31, 52**) — to the nation of Israel. This offer was contingent on

Israel's *national* repentance (a requirement due to the nation's disobedience through centuries of time, until that time [a condition that continues to exist during the present time], described in **Isaiah 1:4, 5** as "*the whole head is sick*"). However, the Jewish people, in keeping with their past disobedience, rejected the offer and their Messiah, resulting in the crucifixion of the Lord (**Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 16:21; 20:17-19; 23:34-39; 26:3-5, 14; Luke 4:28-30; John 19:10-16; Acts 2:22-24, 36; 3:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15; Revelation 1:7**)

Thirty-seven years following Christ's crucifixion, in 70 A.D., God punished Israel with the destruction of Jerusalem. This time period, which involved God's dealings with the Jews, lasted nearly 2,000 years — shy of seven years, which will be dealt with in the future during the seven year Tribulation, a time of severe judgment.

The third dispensation opened with the creation of the "*one new man in Christ,*" neither Jew nor Gentile, but the two forming the Church. This third and last special creative act of God within the human race is the Church of God (Christians). And this creation, rather than occurring in the *physical* realm, occurred in the *spiritual* realm. The former two creations (Jew and Gentile) could be passed through one's progeny, but not so with the third creation (Christian). Within God's plans and purposes, all spiritual blessings for mankind were to be realized through Abraham and his seed. Israel was set aside temporarily and God gave the responsibility to the Church to be ministers of God's Word to the ends of the earth. God called into existence an entirely *new creation* "*in Christ,*" who would be "*Abraham's seed* [because of an individual's positional standing '*in Christ,*' who is Abraham's Seed], *and heirs according to the promise*" (**Galatians 3:26-29; 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; 2 Corinthians 5:17**). And God is presently offering to this *new creation* "*in Christ*" that which was taken from Israel—the heavenly land, not the earthly land. Israel's covenant of the earthly land will never change. They will possess and rule from their land, Jerusalem --- forever. The remnant of Israel will one day inherit their earthly promise and those within the Church, who prove to be faithful, will inherit the heavenly promise.

Israel's rejection of the proffered heavenly kingdom was the reason for a third creation, occupying a position "*in Christ*" as Christ's body and Christ as the Head of the body (**Ephesians 1:22, 23**).

This was something not possible for Israel, for Israel was God's wife (**Jeremiah 2:20; 3:1-8, 14-20; Ezekiel 16; Hosea 1:2; 4:15**) and did not comprise Christ's body. The existence of the *one new man* "in Christ" consisted of both *Abraham's seed* and *Christ's body*, a body of believers to be taken from His body as His bride (**Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:7**) who is to co-reign with Him from the heavenly realm of the kingdom. (**Ephesians 2:6, 7; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 3:1; 11:16; 1 Peter 1:4**). And this new creation is neither Jew nor Gentile, both being removed and placed in a new spiritual identity (**Galatians 3:26-29**). The Jew or Gentile, upon believing in Christ, passes *from death unto life*, allowing him to occupy a positional standing in Christ as God's firstborn son. Within this realm, he is no longer associated with his prior creation, whether Jew or Gentile (**2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-29; Colossians 3:9-11**).

If one was a Jew prior to the time of belief, he ceased to be a Jew. He relinquished his national identity and became a *new creation* "in Christ." "*Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new*" (**2 Corinthians 5:17c**). The same thing pertains if he were a Gentile prior to the time of belief. He also relinquished his national identity and became a *new creation* "in Christ," a Christian. A Jew, relinquishing his national identity, relinquishes his place among a nation promised to one day realize *earthly* promises and blessings (**Isaiah 9:6**). But, by doing so, he comes into possession of a "*higher calling*." He now finds himself part of a nation who is promised to one day realize *heavenly* promises and blessings (**1 Peter 1:3-9; 2:9, 10**).

But this does not dispose of national Israel. Israel will *always* be God's firstborn son. Jews who remain in unbelief make up the nation of Israel. God will be deal with them again in the future and when Christ returns, the nation as a whole will be saved. God will never do away with any of His firstborn sons: Christ, Israel and the Church! (**Romans 11:29**)

A Gentile, relinquishing his national identity, relinquishes his place among the nations who are without God, without hope and blessings (**Ephesians 2:12; 3:5, 6**).

Therefore, the matter surrounding the new creation "in Christ" is *spiritual* and the matter surrounding the prior two creations (in Adam, in Jacob) is *physical* (natural). The first two creations can be passed from one generation to the next via the natural birth, but the latter creation cannot –

it is spiritual and must be experienced upon one's belief on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And upon belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit breathing life into the person who was spiritually dead and bringing about the new creation, results in *no change in the physical*. An example can be seen with Paul, *a new creation in Christ*, could also refer to himself as “a Jew” (by birth— **Acts 21:39**), and “a Hebrew” (**Philippians 3:5**).

His identity “in Christ” was *spiritual* and his identity as “a Jew” had to do with his identity outside of Christ, associating him with that which was natural.

There are numerous examples in Scripture that differentiate Israel, Gentiles and the Church:

1. God created Israel in Jacob (**Isaiah 43:1**)
2. God created the Gentiles (those outside the seed of Abraham) after the creation of Israel, referred to in **Ephesians 2:12**
3. God created the Church, the new man “in Christ,” neither Jew nor Greek. (**Colossians 3:9-11**)

These three creations have and always will be differentiated throughout the ages. They were created so that God's plans and purposes would be fulfilled.

God deals with Christians alone *during the present dispensation, from Pentecost to the rapture*. Christians (Church), forming the “*new creation in Christ*,” **did not** exist prior to Jesus first coming (otherwise it would not be a “new” creation); and when this dispensation is over (which will occur when the Spirit completes His search for a bride for God's Son), Christians (all) will be removed. God can (and will) then turn back prior to Pentecost with Israel and complete His dealings with this nation, a period of seven years (Daniel's unfulfilled 70th Week), the Tribulation period, which will bring down Gentile world power and bring Israel to a state of repentance.

Presently, Israel remains in a state of blindness until Christ returns and restores them to their land. Israel in that future Day will be at the “*head of the nations*” as a theocracy, ruling and reigning from their earthly land, a land that God had initially promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Faithful Christians, along with faithful Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints, will rule and reign from the heavenly realm of the kingdom.

At present, we are living in the third dispensation, and God says that it will end in judgment as well. This is *the dispensation of the fullness of the times* (**Ephesians 1:10**). The close of this dispensation will be seen with the removal of the Church to the judgment seat of Christ in heaven. Our Most High God has revealed in His Word what is to come --- prophecy that is certain to be realized. Therefore, we must turn our attention to the Word of God. Biblical prophecy is the only reliable source connecting the past to the future. And within prophecy, it is revealed numerous times that we are most assuredly living in the last days. A period of 2,000 years since Pentecost, and three dispensations totaling 6,000 years is coming to pass.

The fourth dispensation will be the Messianic Era, which will last for a period of one thousand years and involves God dealing with all three groups: Jews, Gentiles and the Church as a whole. God will give the kingdom to His Son, and He will begin His rule and reign along with His elect over the earth. God has called both Jesus and Israel His firstborn, One begotten and one adopted. And through Christ, the Church (more specifically, the overcomers) is considered His firstborn through adoption, but not made manifest until the judgment seat of Christ.

Jesus as Firstborn:

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

Israel as firstborn:

Thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn." (Exodus 4:22)

Church as firstborn:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

These three firstborn sons of God will rule during the future Messianic Era and throughout the Eternal Ages. Israel will rule on the earth (**2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 43:5, 6; Jeremiah 31:1-14; Ezekiel 37:12-14; Chapter 40; Revelation 5:10**) and Christians will rule from the heavens (**John 14:1-4; Ephesians 1:10; Philippians 3:14, 20; Colossians 1:5; 3:1, 2; Hebrews 11:13-16; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:4-9; Revelation 2:7, 3:12, 21**). Christ will rule and reign from both realms of the kingdom: He will sit in the heavenly throne with His bride—those selected from the Church (**Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 3:21, 22-4:5; 19:6-9**) and He will rule and reign from David's earthly throne in Jerusalem with God's wife, Israel (**2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 3:14; Isaiah 9:6**). Therefore, Christ, being omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, will reign from both realms of the kingdom—the earthly Mount Zion and Jerusalem (**Joel 2:32**) and the heavenly Mount Zion and Jerusalem (**Hebrews 12:22**). And this is not difficult for our God to do, the One who created the worlds (ages), the heavens and the earth, angels, man and everything in it.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, “Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:26, 27)

CHAPTER FOUR – PART ONE

MAN'S DAY: 6,000 YEARS

In order to properly understand the timeline in which God set His plan of redemption for man, we must start where God started --- in the beginning, in the Book of **Genesis**. The creation of the heavens and earth was not a random event, but was always in the plans and purposes of God. All three Persons of the Trinity were present for the implementation of the creation. The heavens were created first as the base of rulership over the earth.

“....your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that heaven rules.” (Daniel 4:26)

Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool.” (Isaiah 66:1)

The heavens and the earth were created perfectly and not in vain, but to be inhabited.

“For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:18)

Following the creation of the heavens and the earth, God created the angels, assigning His messianic angel, Lucifer, to be ruler over the earth. This messianic angel became Satan, who originated sin, leading a third of the created angels away from God. It was Satan who caused the earth to become void and in chaos.

“You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned. Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, o covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.” (Ezekiel 28:14)

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness (evilness; Satan) was on the face of the deep. (Genesis 1:2)

It is at this point in time that the ruined creation was restored, beginning with the heavens then the earth. God created all things through Christ and for Christ; and from the beginning it was purposed that Christ and His co-heirs would have rulership one day.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:1)

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16)

God's work of restoration for the ruined creation resulted in six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest, and on the sixth day, this work of restoration included the creation of man.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion...” Then God saw everything He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. (Genesis 1:26-2:2)

Then, immediately after the fall of man, God began a work of restoring ruined man. And in dealing with the restoration of ruined man, although the numeric pattern stays the same, the duration of days change. In God's like pattern, He would continue this restoration for six thousand years of work followed by a seventh one-thousand year of rest. Each of the six days of work will be one thousand years in length, followed by a thousand years of rest (1000 year reign of Christ), and following, the Eternal Ages.

In comparing Scripture with Scripture, the meaning of it is this: that in six thousand years from the creation of man, the Lord will bring all things to an end, for with Him one day is as a thousand years, as God so testifies:

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

(2 Peter 2:8)

Then, at the end of six thousand years, the millennial *Rest* will begin, which will last for a period of one thousand years. Just as the restorative works of all the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present condition was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy, this long period of restoration would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years, in which Christ along with His saints would reign upon the earth. And it is therefore of great importance to see why God sanctified the seventh day, as the *day of Rest*---a history of the past and a prophecy of the future.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

(Genesis 2:3)

And this is the exact pattern that God used in setting required times and feasts to be celebrated and remembered by the Jewish people, as a *sign* to keep it ever in their minds, a *sign* pointing to the Seventh day, the end of this age.

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:3)

God's covenant to Israel for the inheritance of Canaan, the promise land, was a promise of *rest* to all those who were obedient to Him.

So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.

Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. (Joshua 21:43-45)

The Promised Land is a *type* of the future kingdom on earth for the nation of Israel and is also a *type* of the future kingdom in heaven for the bride. Entering and conquering the land enabled Israel to experience God's rest, which He had covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The author of Hebrews equates this Old Testament concept of *rest* with entering into Christ's rest, that is, His future Millennial kingdom.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them (Israel); but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

*“So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,”
although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works,' and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day...

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:1-7, 9)

The *Day of Rest* pertains to the Seventh Day, the seventh one thousand year period of the Messianic Era, also known as the Lord's Day. Man's Day is the timeline from the creation of man, Adam, until Christ's return for His Church or the end of this age, a time span of 6,000 years.

Chapters **five** through **nine** of **Genesis** cover ten generations from Adam to Noah. These ten generations are types (examples) covering three dispensations to include the rapture of the Church, the Tribulation, and the opening of the Messianic Era. In the genealogical listing from Adam to

Noah, it is interesting to note that they were designed to mark certain key figures for purposes of *connection*, for tying together two great periods (two ages: present age and Millennial age), and for revealing the seed by which Christ would come. And the reason for this particular order has to do with man's restoration after his fall:

1. Salvation through death and shed blood (Abel) which reveals man's spirit salvation.
2. The removal of a man (Enoch) from earth to heaven before the Flood reveals the removal of the Church before the Tribulation.
3. A man (Noah) left behind but saved through the Flood reveals the nation of Israel being saved through the Tribulation.

Note that Enoch foreshadows *all* Christians and that he was raptured to heaven *before* the Flood. He was the seventh from Adam [**Jude 14**]. The number "seven" in Scripture indicates "completeness for that which is in view." Therefore, the genealogical listing from Adam to Enoch (**Genesis 5:1-25**) forms *seven* genealogies:

1. Adam 930 years (**Genesis 5:5**)
2. Seth 912 years (**Genesis 5:8**)
3. Enosh 905 years (**Genesis 5:11**)
4. Cainan 910 years (**Genesis 5:14**)
5. Mahalalel 895 years (**Genesis 5:17**)
6. Jared 962 years (**Genesis 5:20**)
7. Enoch 365 years (**Genesis 5:23**)

During Jared's day, man's wickedness upon the earth was great, as angels in the kingdom of Satan took wives from the female descendants of Enoch, Cain's son [**Genesis 6:1-4**]. Therefore, God commenced judgment upon the earth in order to cleanse it (with the Flood) from this corruption of the human race, a distortion of the husband-wife relationship that God had initially established. The disruption of this divinely established relationship (the pattern in which man will conduct his appointed rule in the future kingdom), was the way Satan selected to prevent man from ascending the throne. However, before the Flood, God extended a grace period of 120 years before expending His wrath. Recorded in **Genesis 6:3**, the Lord says,

"My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

The combined number of years in which each individual lived from Adam to Enoch until the Flood (5,879 years plus the grace period of 120 years), equal to 5,999 years — one year short of 6,000 years. Therefore, God patterned these genealogies in specific order and highlighted these seven individual's life span for a specific reason — to reveal the timeline of the end of the age. Furthermore, the three generations following Enoch, the 10th generation (the number "10" meaning completion), bring the whole matter to a close, with Israel restored and the Messianic Era ushered in.

Note that this "grace period of 120 years" alone reveals the length of time assigned for Man's Day, a time from Adam to the end of this age. This is the allotted time in which God gave man *to work out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12b)*.

Within the Levitical laws, God commanded that every fifty years be considered one *jubilee*. The word *jubilee* is the Hebrew word *yobel* (Strong's #H3104) meaning "the blast of a trumpet; the signal of the silver trumpets—rams horn, trumpet;" and *terua* (Strong's #H8643) meaning "acclamation of joy or a battle-cry; especially clangor of trumpets, as an alarm." On the fiftieth year (a jubilee) it was considered a Sabbath year of rest. The Jewish people were to celebrate and keep *the jubilee* throughout their generations, which had to do with *redemption*, both for individuals and for land.

"That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field." (Leviticus 25:11)

In the year of Jubilee, every fiftieth year, the Israelites were to proclaim liberty, which meant specifically that all debts were canceled, all Israelites who sold themselves into slavery were freed, and all unredeemed land reverted back to its original owner. The year of Jubilee then has to do with the Jewish people who will one day be restored to their land. It has to do with Christ, the Lamb slain, found worthy to open the scroll and redeem the land, the earth, at the end of the age. It has to do with the

redemption of the inheritance (the earth) and with marriage (God and Israel; Christ and His bride).

Therefore, if you take one jubilee (50 years) and multiply it by 120 years of Man's Day, the result is 6,000 years. Within this grace period of six thousand years, God provided man the opportunity to follow Him and allow the Spirit of God to do His work in order to prepare for the Sabbath year of Rest — the Messianic Era.

Man has been given 6,000 years to show they are worthy to rule. At the end of this time, the trumpet of God will sound proclaiming the end of the age. Following the removal of the Church to the Judgment seat, the overcomers (those shown qualified) will possess the covering of glory, in the image and likeness of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:42-49). The Lord will restore Israel back to their land, the redemption of the inheritance will be completed, and a dual marriage will be consummated, both Christ and His bride (a select portion called out from the Church) along with God and His wife, Israel.

The following table shows Man's Day of six thousand years from the perspective of restoration week, the dispensations, and in Jubilees:

Restoration Week

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
4000 B.C.	3000 B.C.	2000 B.C.	1000 B.C.	1000 A.D.	2000 A.D.	3000 A.D.
Adam	Abraham			Jesus	Present	Kingdom
40 Jubilees	40 Jubilees			40 Jubilees	120 Jubilees	
2000 years	2000 years			2000 years	6000 years	

The first row shows the material creation restored within six days of work and ending on the seventh day of rest. The second and remaining rows show Man's Day from Adam (4000 B.C.) to the present, which totals 120 jubilee years or 6,000 years, with Man's Day coming to a close and the Kingdom Age of one thousand years approaching.

God provides another example of the timeline in which Man's Day will come to an end --- the *Third Day*. There is perfect order in the times and events of God's actions. They are examples set for us so that we may

know His plan and be prepared. One of these examples of the Third Day, two thousand years of Man's Day followed by resurrection on the third one-thousandth year (from Pentecost to the end of this age) is recorded in the Book of **Jonah**:

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried....."

...Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God...

...Salvation is of the Lord.

So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."

So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." (Jonah 1:17-2:2, 6, 9c, 10; 3:1-3)

Jonah is presented as two types: the nation of Israel and Christ. Jonah was in the belly of the fish, in the sea ("sea" in Scripture either refers to "Gentiles" or "the place of death") for three days. On the *third* day (signifying resurrection), Jonah was raised up out of the sea (place of death) and was again called to be a witness in Nineveh. This time he obeyed and immediately went to preach God's word to the Gentiles.

This account forms a word-picture of Israel's present condition, being in a state of death because of their blindness and disobedience. However, on the third day, at the end of this age, Israel will be raised up out of the place of death and will finally fulfill that which they were initially called to do — they will carry God's message to the Gentiles.

In the Book of **Matthew**, when Jesus was ministering to the Scribes and Pharisees, He brought up the significance of Jonah and the three days as a sign for the coming of the Son of Man:

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh (Gentiles) will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

The queen of the South (Gentiles) will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew 13:39-42)

In **Matthew 13:39-42**, Jonah is presented as a type of Christ. In **verse 40**, Jesus is speaking of His own death and resurrection. He then speaks of the 'men of Nineveh' or the saved from among the Gentiles who, unlike the Jewish people, believed in the Son of Man and will rise up and rule on the Third Day, following two thousand years from Christ's resurrection.

We can also see the significance of the Third Day with Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus died and was buried for two days and on the third day, He was resurrected. The number of days of Jesus' death and resurrection symbolize the number of years (in thousands) of the rapture and resurrection of the Church, as well as Israel's resurrection.

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. (Matthew 16:21)

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [Old Testament Scriptures], and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3)

Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two

days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. (Hosea 6:1, 2)

Hosea 6:1, 2 is a prophecy directed to the nation of Israel, a prophecy indicating that after two thousand years from Pentecost, after being scattered and held captive amongst the nations, Israel will be resurrected and restored. Yet this prophesy will inevitably affect Christians as well, as God will revive and raise them up after two thousand years from Pentecost, on the Third Day, to heaven.

Another example of the Third Day (and the Seventh Day) is revealed in Lazarus' death and resurrection. Four days after Lazarus sickness and near death, Jesus is called to come and heal him. However, Jesus stays away two more days, and on the third day, He raises Lazarus from the dead. This typifies two thousand years from Pentecost until the end of the age and a total of six thousand years from Adam. It typifies the time when the Lord is away and when Israel is in a state of sickness until the Lord returns. On the third day, Israel will be restored and the earthly promises made to them will be realized.

When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."...

*"Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."
(John 11:4-7, 11b)*

God's timing to accomplish His purpose is perfect. Man's Day, which includes six thousand years from Adam to Christ's second return, or two thousand years from Pentecost to Christ's second return, is surely coming to a close.

God allotted this time for the purpose of accomplishing His work in redeeming man by and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God calls on those who will hear His Word, believe in Christ, and overcome their lives by being faithfully obedient to Him until the end. All of which is necessary in order to have a part in Christ's Millennial kingdom.

HISTORY OF MAN

*HISTORY OF MAN
6000 YEARS
(360-Year Calendar)
Three Dispensations*

(2000 Years) 3874 BC to 1902 BC

1st Dispensation (Destruction- Tower of Babel)

** (1993 Years) 1902 BC to 63 AD*

2nd Dispensation (Destruction of Jerusalem- 70 AD)

(2000 Years) 63 AD to 20?? AD

3rd Dispensation (Judgment Seat of Christ)

** (7 Years) 20?? AD to 20?? AD*

Tribulation to Christ's 2nd Coming

**Israel's setting aside in 63 AD left 7 years remaining of their 2000 year dispensation, which will be completed yet future.*

CHAPTER FOUR – PART TWO

DAY OF THE LORD: MESSIANIC ERA

(Continuation of the Prologue)

Seated on His heavenly throne, Christ Jesus announces:

"Our mission is to bring order out of disorder and to bring peace out of chaos. From the heavens, we will rule over the nations of the earth until all Gentile rule, all authority and power is put down. All enemies will be put down, and war will not exist among the nations any longer. You are kings and priests, and you shall possess power to rule over the nations. Rule over your designated cities and execute true justice, showing mercy and compassion to all. Beginning this day, govern in peace and righteousness. I will dwell on my Holy Mountain Zion in the midst of My people and sit on David's throne, as well as My Own throne with you in My kingdom in the heavens. The twelve tribes of Israel will possess the land of Israel and will also rule over the Gentile nations under your authority."

At that moment all the saints rise and say,

"Blessed be our King, blessed be our Rock, forever and ever! We serve You, we praise You, we glorify You, O Lord! Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!' "

The crowd breaks up from the Messiah's announcement and proceeds to their places. As Brave Heart walks over to his section, someone pats him on the back to get his attention. He turns around to see who it is, and to his surprise, is thrilled to meet up with his most favorite group of saints. He recognizes his earthly wife and his friends that were part of his Church on earth. Joy fills his heart and he screams,



KINGDOM OF HEAVEN/1000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST



"Praise God! How awesome this is!"

He hugs everyone and they begin to converse about their experiences.

On earth, Israel has been restored and is placed as the head of the nations. As promised from the Lord, the borders of the land are divided as an inheritance among the twelve tribes. A portion of the land is set aside for the Lord, the Holy District. The priests reside in the Holy District, with the center being the sanctuary of the Lord. The Holy City contains twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel and the name of the mountain is: THE LORD IS THERE. The Lord will reign on the Holy Mountain and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is called the City of Truth and the remnant of His people shall be blessed. They shall be given the fruit of the vine and the increase of the ground. No longer will they ever bear the curse among the nations, but will be strong and prosperous over them. And Israel will carry God's message to the ends of the earth for one thousand years. They shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, for they shall feed their flocks with truth.

The Gentiles who survived the Tribulation make up the nations on the earth. Since they still possess the old sin nature, they bear children who also need to be redeemed. Israel's priestly role will be to feed the nations with God's message. At this time, God restores a unified pure language amongst all nations in the worship of Him. And all of God's people come from all nations to worship Him at Mount Zion.

Many nations arrive and say,

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."

The tabernacle that is called the "Holiest of All" has the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold. Inside the ark of the covenant contains the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above the ark is the cherubim of glory overshadowing the Mercy Seat. And sitting on the Mercy Seat is Christ Jesus, filling the temple with all of His glory! He rules and reigns, executes judgment and righteousness on the earth. The wolf dwells with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion are together;

and, a little child leads them. The cow and the bear graze alongside each other, as their young ones lie down together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child plays by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child puts his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy on His holy mountain, for the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord and all is peaceful.

Back in the kingdom of heaven, Brave Heart delights in his priestly rule over the cities to which he is assigned. In spirit, he travels to earth to oversee the people and to promote righteousness. His responsibility is to govern the cities with justice and peace, to encourage all to keep God's statutes, to exalt the Lord and worship at His footstool.

It never ceases to amaze him as he shares the actual throne with Christ, the riches of glory and splendor of the kingdom. He is now in the place he has always dreamed of. He is ruling and reigning with Christ!

The glory of the Lord needs no tabernacle filled with the golden censor or the ephod, the breastplate, the golden lampstand, table of showbread, the altar of incense or the bronze laver, for the Lord Himself replaces all these things. He alone provides the Light, the cleansing, the sacrifice and the life.

Furthermore, Brave Heart receives the supernatural sustenance that comes from the Manna and the Tree of Life that enables him to function effectively as co-ruler in Christ's kingdom. And the most awesome part of the kingdom is the ability to be with Christ, to have a special intimacy with Him.

....Now the thousand years is finished and God releases Satan, who deceives the nations of the earth once again. And as a result of Satan's deceptive acts, the world's armies gather for battle against God as they had done before. Brave Heart knows that this is God's ultimate plan that will close out the Messianic Era, to make an end of sin, to finish the transgression, and to seal up vision and prophecy. He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, after He puts an end to all rule, all authority and all power. Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is Death, so that God His Father may be all in all.

The nations gather together, with millions and millions of soldiers, and surround outside the city of Jerusalem.

Brave Heart tells the others,

"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot such a vain thing?"

The nations counsel together against the Lord and against His Son, saying,

"Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us."

And the Lord God who sits in the heavens laughs at them and holds them in derision. With the breath of God, fire comes down out of heaven and devours them all. The devil who deceived them is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are, and they are tormented day and night forever. Then, the earth and the works that are in it are burned up, as the elements melt with fervent heat and all creation is dissolved.

Afterwards, Brave Heart and the other saints enter the throne room of God to witness the Great White Throne Judgment. First, the sea delivers up the dead and then Hades delivers up the rest of the dead. A great multitude is now present before God's throne. God the Father, Christ by His right hand side and all the saints arrayed in white linen are seated. God is ready to commence judgment on the unsaved.

Books are opened and the dead are judged according to the things which were written in the books; according to their works. Then Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life are also cast into the lake burning with brimstone forever.

Immediately following, a great noise is heard and the heavens are seen passing away, being on fire, as their elements dissolve. Brave Heart stands watching in amazement as he witnesses this occurrence, saying,

"The end of the Millennium is here, now all things are made new."

(Prologue to be continued in Chapter four, part three)



GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT
For the Unsaved -- LAKE OF FIRE

The kingdom of heaven is near; within our reach. The Seventh day, the Third day, will begin the Day of the Lord — the Messianic Era. The Seventh Day is a reference to the Day of Rest, which will begin after 6,000 years from Adam (the first Adam), that which is foreshadowed by the seven days in **Genesis 1:1- 2:3**. The Third Day is a reference to the Day of Resurrection and will begin following 2,000 years from Pentecost (from Christ's Resurrection; the last Adam), that which is foreshadowed by the third day of restoration in **Genesis 1:9, 10** (the waters signifying baptism and resurrection).

Note that Scripture equates *the Day of the Lord* with *the Lord's Day*. Within the context of **Revelation 1:10**, it is clear to see that John's reference to the "Lord's Day" is a reference to the *future* "Day of the Lord." Their meaning is one and the same.

John was not only raptured to heaven but he was transported forward in time to the end of this dispensation where he saw Christ as Judge in the midst of the Church. From this point forward, matters surrounding first the Church and then Israel have to do with judgment and redemption during the Lord's Day, the Day of the Lord. The prophecies recorded in the Old Testament associate the *Day of the Lord* with the Lord's judgment and with redemption (**Joel 2:1-11; Amos 5:16-27; Zephaniah 1:2-18; Zechariah 14:1-15; Malachi 4:1-6**). At the end of 6,000 years of Man's Day, "*the kingdoms of this world*" will become "*the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!*" (**Revelation 11:15**).

The redemption of the inheritance will be completed at this time. The bride will be revealed as Christ's wife. Satan and his angels will no longer hold the scepter of rulership over the earth. Christ the King with His consort queen will finally hold the scepter.

The Day of the Lord, the Messianic Era, is referred to as "*the times of restoration of all things,*" in **Acts 3:19-21**:

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

At present, Christ is acting as High Priest according to the order of Aaron. During the Day of the Lord, a period of one thousand years, there will be a restoration of all things through Christ's work of judging as Priest and King, according to the order of Melchizedek (**Hebrews 7:15**). Melchizedek, a type of Christ, was a king-priest in Salem (**Genesis 14:18**). Salem is an older, shorter name for Jerusalem. The word is based on the root from which we get the word, *shalom*, meaning "peace." Christ will administer cleansing and judgment over the nations of the earth until He (along with His bride and God's wife, Israel) has put down all rule, all power and all authority.

"For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet."
(1 Corinthians 15:25)

Christ will have a dual reign during this time. Christ's rule from the heavens will include His co-heirs (His bride taken from His body, the Church), who will have power and authority over the nations of the earth. Christ's rule on earth will include Israel (God's wife), who will be at the head of the nations. The kingdom that man was created to rule will consist of two realms -- an earthly realm and a heavenly realm:

Earthly Realm (Israel):

For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously. (Isaiah 24:23)

Heavenly Realm (Church):

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20)

The two realms of the kingdom can clearly be identified within the Book of **Revelation** chapter **five** concerning the redemption of the inheritance,

which had to do with both heavenly and earthly realms of the kingdom about to exist under Christ, His bride, and Israel over the Gentile nations.

God's perfectly divine plan is revealed using many different forms, i.e., using numbers, types and antitypes, metaphors, and parables. For example, *the number three represents divine perfection and the number seven represents completion.* "Three" reflects the trinity, the third day of Christ's resurrection, and the third one thousand year period from Pentecost -- **the Kingdom Age.** "Seven" reflects the Seventh day of rest, the Sabbath, and the seventh one-thousand year period from Adam --- **the Kingdom Age.**

An example of the redemptive timeline associated with the Seventh Day is recorded in chapter **six** in the Book of **Joshua**, a passage that pertains to the destruction of Jericho:

Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." (Joshua 6:1-5)

But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" (Joshua 6:15, 16)

In **Joshua 6:1-26**, the typology has to do with Israel. It has to do with Israel's repentance at the end of the Tribulation and their *faith* in the Lord.

The account of Joshua and the destruction of Jericho is a similar picture of what will occur at the end of this age with Israel and the destruction of Gentile world power. Upon Israel's repentance at the end of the Tribulation, Christ will return, gather the whole of Israel, restore them back to their land, and bring down Gentile domination. At this point in time, Israel will gain the city of Jerusalem forever.

By the same analogy, at the end of six thousand years immediately prior to the Tribulation, at the sound of His trumpet and His great shout (**Psalm 47; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17**), God will raise the Church to heaven to be judged. Upon decisions and determinations at the Judgment Seat of Christ, those who had remained *faithful* during their earthly tenure will be chosen as the bride of Christ and will be rewarded with inheriting the kingdom. On the Seventh Day, Israel will inherit the earthly portion of the kingdom, and the bride of Christ will inherit the heavenly portion of the kingdom.

Therefore, it will be our *faith* that will bring about our victory in gaining the kingdom in the age to come, just as it was Israel's *faith* that brought about the fall of Jericho, allowing them their victory in gaining the earthly kingdom. We see this recorded in **Hebrews 11:30**:

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

On the Seventh Day, after six thousand years from Adam, the Messianic Era will begin. The *rest* in **Hebrews** chapters **three** and **four** is patterned after God's own rest on the seventh day in Genesis 2:1. It signifies a *future rest* associated with entering the kingdom of heaven, which will be awarded to overcomers who have finished their work for God while living on earth. Therefore, this *rest* is not automatic; but is conditional, requiring diligence and *faithful* obedience to God. The truth is that most Christians today, like the Israelites of the past, will not qualify.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.

Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.'

So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.' "
(Hebrews 3:7-11)

Since the time of Israel's crucifixion of their Messiah and their subsequent setting aside as a nation, the Jewish people today find themselves in an *unsaved state*. And because Christ's High Priestly ministry is a present work on behalf of *believers* (the Church), the Jewish people cannot presently avail themselves of any cleansing from defilement. They could not go to Christ and receive cleansing, for the Mosaic Law had to be of the Levitical line and Christ is not of this line. Christ is from the tribe of Judah. However, Christ *can* conduct a ministry for Christians during the present dispensation, as Christians are not under the Mosaic Law.

Not until that Day, at Christ's second coming, will Israel experience her national Passover – through applying the blood which was shed 2,000 years ago under the new covenant. Today, Israel has yet to apply the blood, a firm belief in the Lord (as opposed to the first generation Israelites under Moses, though disobedient afterwards, did apply the blood at Passover under the first covenant – though the first covenant failed as it involved works of the flesh. Hence, the reason for Christ's first coming and a new covenant).

But in that future Day, Israel's eyes will be opened; the nation as a whole will experience *the birth from above* when they look upon the One "*whom they have pierced.*" Only then will cleansing occur and Israel be saved. God will put a new spirit in them and they will walk in truth and righteousness. Therefore, Israel today will remain in her present blinded condition until the end of the Tribulation. The nation still remains in unbelief and will not be able to find rest in the Promise Land during the present day. Christ must first terminate His present ministry after the order of Aaron for Christians and return as King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Only then can Israel be cleansed and be free to return to her land, within a theocracy.

For the nation of Israel, God's *rest* will be the entrance and inheritance of the earthly land, the Millennial kingdom. For qualified Christians, God's *rest* will be the entrance and inheritance of the heavenly land, the

Millennial kingdom. And by understanding the Third Day and the Seventh Day as it relates to the Day of the Lord, we can begin to discern the signs of the times, the end of this age.

CHAPTER FOUR – PART THREE

ETERNAL AGES

(Continuation of the Prologue)

At the end of the Millennium, after all things have been brought under subjection, Christ will then deliver the kingdom and place all things, including Himself, under subjection to God the Father, as the last enemy, Death, is destroyed (**1 Corinthians 15:24-28**).

Brave Heart recalls the vision, witnessing God out of heaven pouring down fire at the multiple millions who make up the world's armies, who surround the beloved city, Jerusalem, and the saints. God saves His people, the saints from the Holy City and the redeemed from the Gentile nations. He then witnesses the devil and his angels being cast into the lake of fire, who will be tormented day and night.

Brave Heart then witnesses the Great White Throne judgment, where all of the unsaved are cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his angels. He then observes the destruction of the earth and the heavens with fire; and, after the elements of the earth and heaven melt away, Brave Heart witnesses the formation of a new heaven and a new earth. God brings down the holy city, New Jerusalem, to be the capital of the new earth.

While Brave Heart and all the saints from the kingdom of heaven witness in amazement the marvelous works of God, suddenly they hear a loud voice saying,

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Christ rises from His throne and declares,

“Behold, I make all things new. It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.”

Brave Heart and the others stand and shout,

“Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King! Praise You, Lord! Praise You forever and ever!”

Then one of the seven angels walks up to Brave Heart and the rest of the bride saying,

“Come bride of Christ, I will show you the great city, the New Jerusalem, having the glory of God.”

They stand in awe at the great and high wall that encompasses the city. It has twelve gates with twelve angels standing at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The city is laid out as a square having three gates on its east side, three gates on its north side, three gates on its south side, and three gates on its west side. The wall of the city is founded on twelve enormous stones and on them are the names of the twelve apostles of Christ.

The bride enters in, following the angel. The angel has a tool to measure the city, its gates and its wall. The city is shaped as a cube. Each section of the wall measures 1400 miles wide and 1400 miles high. Each section is 200 feet thick. Brave Heart moves to a higher level in order to view the city. The city gives out its light, as a very bright shining jasper stone and clear as crystal. It is made of pure gold and the foundations of the wall are covered with all kinds of precious stones. The twelve gates are made of pearl and the street leading up to the city is paved of pure gold.

The new earth seems twice as large as the one it replaced, with the New Jerusalem in all its glory positioned on top of it. There is no need for a temple inside the city, for the Lord God Almighty and Christ Jesus are there. And there is no longer a sun or a moon needed for light, for the glory of God gives a far superior light to the city. As the multitudes of believers come out of their places, either from the lake of fire or from outer darkness, they are gathered together in front of the city to enter the gates. The angels escort them according to their assigned areas. Brave

Heart and the rest of the bride are inside the city square waiting for all of the believers to walk in and join them. All those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will dwell in the New Jerusalem with God the Father and His Son. They all are joined together with Brave Heart and the rest of the bride.

As the multiple thousands of believers walk into the city, they are escorted to the throne of God and of His Christ. From now on they shall see death no more, nor sorrow, nor pain. There will be no more crying, for God has wiped away every tear from their eyes. Their days past are forgotten and there is no memory of them ever again. As the believers approach the throne, they are speechless. A pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flows from the throne. In the middle of the street and on both sides of the river, are trees of life, each bearing twelve fruits every month. The leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations; therefore, there is no longer a curse on the land or the people. Those who compose the bride have now put on the image and likeness of God. They are blessed forever. They see God face to face, and His name is placed on their foreheads. They shall all serve and reign with Him during the Eternal Ages that follow, a period of time which has no end.

(End of Prologue)

At the end of the Seventh Day the Eternal Ages will begin, when Christ Jesus delivers the kingdom to God the Father so that the Father may be “*all in all*” (1 **Corinthians 15:24-28**). There will be a “new heaven and a new earth.” (**Revelation 21:1**). New Jerusalem, the capital of the earth, will stand on the earth and will be the center of government. (**Revelation 21:2**) God the Father will dwell in this city, with His Son, and will administer the rule of the heavens and earth through His servants. Therefore, man will not only rule over the new earth but the entire of the heavens as well.

When the Eternal Ages begin, there will be a complete restoration of the land and a complete restoration of man, without sin and death. At this point in time, God's plan and purpose relative to mankind and the rule of the heavens and the earth will be accomplished.

All Christians will possess the image and likeness of God as it was in the beginning when God first created man. They will possess a glorified, spiritual (animated by the Spirit, not blood) and immortal body, which will remain throughout the Eternal Ages. No longer will man be bound by a mortal or natural body requiring food and water, or subject to pain and suffering.

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (Christ). (1 Corinthians 15:49)

The Eternal Ages will be the perfect picture beyond the Millennium, a restoration of righteousness, after complete order once again exists in God's kingdom. And man, in that day, will finally realize God's purpose for His creation. During the Eternal Ages, man will exercise positions of power and authority throughout the entire heavens and earth in God's kingdom. And at this time, the saved Gentile nations and those Christians not holding positions of rulership during the Millennium will be brought into and have a part in this eternal rule. All Christians, with bodies animated by the Spirit, will serve and worship God the Father throughout the Eternal Ages.

In light of the story of Brave Heart, knowing the sequence of things to come and what must shortly take place, we should make it our aim to live for God daily, to pattern ourselves after Christ. We must plant in our minds the events that are forthcoming and realize the purpose of our creation. Upon understanding the events yet future, do we realize that we are called to a place *so great* that we cannot even wrap our minds around it, for nothing here and now can be closely compared to it? The promise of a glorious inheritance is not something to take lightly. Christ paid the price in order that we may be partakers of the throne with Him in that future Day. He left us an example that we are to follow — death followed by resurrection — the loss of our life now that we may gain our life in the age to come.

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. (Hebrews 13:12-14)

Throughout the Gospels, while Jesus walked the earth and ministered to the people, the center of His teachings was this:

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)

God sent His Son to preach the message of the forthcoming Millennial kingdom, not the Eternal Ages. Actually, little is mentioned in the Word about the events of the Eternal Ages following the Millennium. However, Scripture does reveal that the beginning of the Eternal Ages marks the end of all things on earth — *all* things will pass away. For the overcomers who will qualify to rule and reign with Christ during the Millennium, they will continue to have positions of rulership throughout the Eternal Ages. They will have the privilege and honor to be with Christ and see all things come to pass during and after the Millennium. They will be co-heirs with Christ for one thousand years *before* the Eternal Ages, possessing glorified bodies. And following this, they will continue ruling (in a different capacity) with Him in the New Jerusalem, serving God the Father in honor and glory throughout the Eternal Ages.

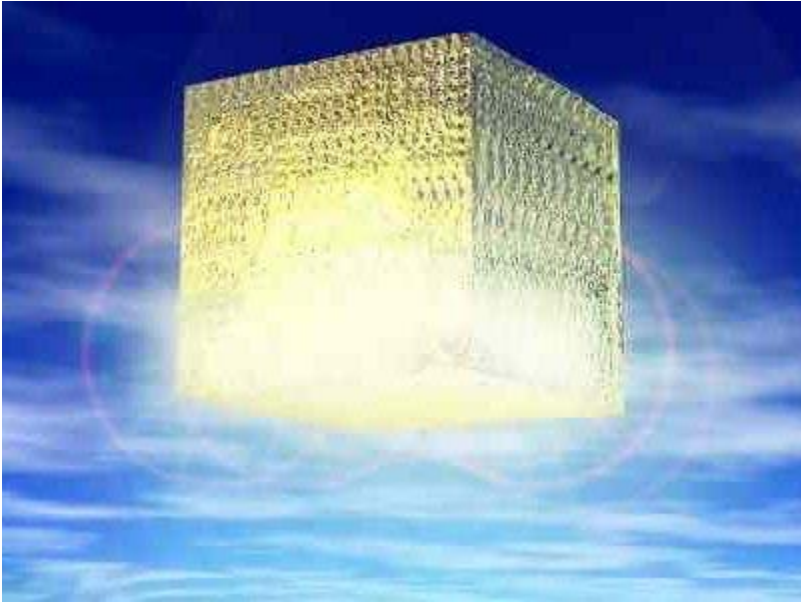
And *this* is why the whole counsel of God is so important to know, to retain and to minister -- all of the Good News: the Gospel of grace (salvation of the spirit) and the Gospel of glory (salvation of the soul). The Gospel of glory is the good news concerning the establishment of the Millennial kingdom, which will come *first* in order to restore all things for the opening of the Eternal Ages.

...and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20, 21)

The Day of the Lord (the Messianic Era) will be a time before the Eternal Ages to bring order to all things and to cleanse God's people so that at the close of that Day, all things will be restored, enemies will be put down and righteousness will dwell. The present heavens and earth will be burned.

Then, the new Heavens and new Earth will be formed. The descent of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (with the bride - **Revelation 21:2, 9a**), to the new Earth, will mark the beginning of the Eternal Ages.



THE NEW JERUSALEM

ETERNAL AGES

and completed. God planned everything with man's redemption in view, from eternity past to eternity future.

Though we do not know, nor will we know, the exact day and hour in which the Lord will return, God did provide prophetic insight to His prophets, revealing many signs in Scripture to give us ample warning of the nearness of His return. Many Bible students have prophesied on the actual date of the time of the end, yet none have succeeded. We are not to be consumed with the exact day and hour of His return. Rather, we are warned throughout Scripture to be well prepared for His return, ready to stand unashamed at the Judgment seat of Christ.

Everything in Scripture moves toward the goal of the coming kingdom, things having to do with Christian preparedness in view of Christ's return. Christians are to watch for Him daily and be prepared with good works.

The words concerning the redemption of the inheritance during the time of the end have been *closed up and sealed until the time of the end* (**Daniel 12:9**); and, at that time, the Lamb of God will be proclaimed by His angels to be worthy to open the seals and fulfill all prophecy once and for all (**Revelation 5:5**). The signs of the times, however, do reveal the close proximity of the end-time so that we can be prepared:

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';

and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. 'Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.'" (Matthew 16:1-3)

God had revealed His plans and purposes to His prophets, which are written in His Word, including the sequence in which His plans will come to pass:

Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

And through the Word, God reveals these secrets to Christians.

When God dealt with man in the past and closed a dispensation in judgment, He always gave ample warning. He gave many signs to make it evident that some great event was about to take place. The building of the Ark and Noah's preaching was a sure sign before the Flood. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent angels to warn believers to flee to the mountains.

When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey accompanied by His followers as they held the palms, all of Israel should have perceived this sign as revealing their Messiah who would enter the city, be crucified, and be resurrected. The Jews were given ample warning in the Old Testament Scriptures, as seen in **Zechariah 9:9**:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And just as it was then, so it is in our generation. God has given us signs of His coming and of the end of this age.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" **(Matthew 24:3)**

And the reason that Jesus wanted them to know the signs of His coming was so that "no one deceives you" -- because of false Christs and false prophets. Likewise, Christians can know the nearness of the Lord's return through the signs of the times. Christians, though, cannot know the day nor the hour, for this has been reserved for God only.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." **(Matthew 24:36)**

The way in which this verse reads (in the English text) has left many with the thought that even Christ Himself did not know the day and hour of His return, which would be a contradiction upon His deity. Because of this,

many theologians have attempted to place limitations in connection with Christ's incarnation, having appeared in the "likeness of sinful flesh" on earth. However, this verse actually teaches something quite different. Correctly translated, this verse is directly addressing the deity of Christ, revealing to the disciples that He was exactly who He claimed to be – God. The Greek words "*ei me*," translated "but" in both **Matthew 24:36** and **Mark 13:32** really mean "if not" [The Greek word *ei* means "if," and the Greek word *me* means "not."]. This verse then could be understood to mean, "If I were not God as well as man, even I would not know the day nor the hour." Therefore, **Mark 13:32** corrected would read:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, if not the Father."

In other words, Jesus said that if He were not the Father He would not know. However, Jesus is the Father and therefore He does know this and all things.

One of the prophetic signs concerning Christ's second return is revealed in **Matthew 24:32-34** in the Parable of the Fig Tree:

Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near---at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

This passage refers to events mentioned in **Matthew 24:29-31**. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will return and gather the Jews from the four corners of the earth, bringing them back into their land. At this time, Israel will be restored as a nation again, and *this* event is a sign of the end of the age. Jesus said that the generation that sees the fulfillment of these wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes, followed by Israel becoming a nation again, will see His return.

"*All these things*" mentioned in **Matthew 24:1-31**, which are to take place in this generation, includes the Tribulation, the Antichrist and the appearance of Christ in glory. And prior to these events of the

Tribulation, the Church will be removed from the earth, known as “the rapture” (Greek: *Harpazo*, meaning “caught up”).

In looking at all three dispensations, the author believes that Man’s Day of six thousand years is soon coming to a close. From the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ around 33 A.D. until the end of this present dispensation totaling 2,000 years marks the near end of Man’s Day. The signs in Scripture give ample warning concerning the end of the age. Thus, we should prepare ourselves for His return at any moment.

The Book of **Daniel** is a testimony showing how God works out His promises through His servants even in the courts of pagan rulers. Daniel was given understanding and visions to foresee future events at the end of Man’s Day.

Daniel’s visions for the Seventy Weeks Prophecy were given by God during the Babylonian exile and during the reign of Darius in 539 B.C., after the temple had been destroyed in 586 B.C., and for the purpose of foretelling future events concerning the end of the age. Actually, all of the Book of **Daniel** is prophecy concerning the time of the end, which is further understood in corresponding passages, and which are revealed in the companion Book of **Revelation**. Therefore, we will begin the seventy weeks prophecy from Daniel’s time and follow it through to the close of this age.

THE SEVENTY-WEEKS PROPHECY

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore, consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:20-27)

In **Daniel 9:1**, Daniel prayed to the Lord, requesting that He bless the city of Jerusalem and the people of Israel. It was 539 B.C. Daniel had no temple to go to, for it had been destroyed; therefore, he asked God to restore Israel and the temple, and rebuild the city. Then, in **Daniel 9:21**, the angel Gabriel came to him, telling him that at the beginning of Daniel's prayer and request to God, the command went out to give him the vision of the end times, that Israel and the temple would be restored and the city rebuilt.

The first temple, built by Solomon, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In 516 B.C., the temple was rebuilt. This second temple was lavishly renovated by Herod the Great and completed in 64 A.D. In 70 A.D., the temple was completely destroyed and the nation of Israel was once again dispersed. The seventy years of the desolations of Jerusalem

spoken through Jeremiah pointed to the Seventy weeks prophecy of 490 (seventy times seven) years -- then the end will come.

...that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:2)

In **Daniel 9:24**, the prophecy begins with the revealing of the time of the end: “*Seventy weeks are determined*” for the people of Israel and for the holy city. *Seventy weeks* may also be translated seventy “*sevens.*” “*Weeks*” translated in the Hebrew language means “*sevens, specifically a week of years, i.e., seven years.*” Therefore, a seventy week exile would be expected to last for seven times seventy years — 490 years.

In **Daniel 9:25**, Gabriel tells Daniel “*that from the going forth of the command*” (from verse **23**) *to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years)*, that the city of Jerusalem and its walls shall be built again.

This part of the prophecy was realized when King Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.) gave Nehemiah the order in 444 B.C. (on the 20th year of his reign) to re-build Jerusalem and its wall (**Nehemiah 2**).

From the command to build the city and the wall in Jerusalem in 444 B.C. to the crucifixion and ascension of our Messiah in 33 A.D, it totaled 477 years. But these are years of 365 days per year, and Scripture uses 360 days per year (**Genesis 8:3, 4; Daniel 7:25**). To convert, the number of days must first be figured.

In calculating the number of days, we take $444 + 33 = 477$ years. Thus, 477×365.25 [.25 added for leap years] = 174,224.25 days. Then, we divide 174,224.25 by 360, which totals 483.94 years.

And by subtracting the beginning and ending dates of the years between 444 B.C. and 33 A.D., the figure of exactly 483 years would result.

Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension followed, which set aside God's dealings with the nation of Israel, bringing in the creation of the Church. God stopped Israel's time clock until the future Tribulation. The future Tribulation, lasting seven years (one *week*), will complete the 490

years (seventy *weeks*) of God's dealings with Israel and will bring the present age to a close.

If Israel would have believed in their Messiah, the Millennial kingdom would have been fulfilled at that time. However, Israel did not believe, but rejected and crucified their Messiah (**1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15**). Because of this, God's dealings with Israel were set aside in early 63 A.D, the people (Gentiles) destroyed their city and the temple in 70 A.D -- *the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*. The "*prince who is to come*" in this verse is a reference to the Antichrist. **Daniel 9:26** states "*the end of it shall be with a flood,*" in which the word "*flood*" is best translated "outrageous, overwhelming or overflowing" and refers to the destruction of the city and the temple in 70 A.D, and will be the case during the last half of the future Tribulation.

It is interesting to note that in early 63 A.D. the offer of the *heavenly* kingdom was strictly being offered to the Church (**Acts 28:28**) and no longer to Israel. *Seven* years later, in 70 A.D., God's judgment came upon the nation of Israel with the destruction of Jerusalem. These two accounts reveal the order in which the Lord will deal with Israel and the Church at the end of this age. The Church will be removed first, and then God will resume His dealings with Israel for seven years, bringing about their call of repentance as well as their restoration. In calculating a 2000 year dispensation from the year 63 A.D. (using 360 days per year), one can determine the close proximity of the end of this age.

The Antichrist will arise opening the seven year Tribulation (verse **27**), and once again Israel's time clock will begin. At this time the Church will have been removed to heaven and will no longer be in view. The Antichrist will make a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years (one *week*), allowing them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. But after three and one half years, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, take away the daily sacrifices, and will commit "*the abomination of desolation*" (verse **27**; **Matthew 24:15**) in the new Holy Temple where Antichrist will sit and proclaim that he is God whom all must worship, until the consummation of the age (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**). Christ's return will bring about this consummation.

Several current trends provide insight on just how close we are to the end times. No one can dispute the fact that the present world system considers

true Bible doctrine obsolete. The Church has essentially abandoned biblical prophecy altogether, leaving the message of Christ's second return, the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Messianic Era unspoken. Today, the Church as a whole has completely fallen away from "the faith," i.e., the Word of the kingdom.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

The world today, composed of an ungodly, evil society, is more closely aligned with the enemy of our soul. An eye opener is the economic downfall of world-wide societies. Corruption and deception in the world's financial markets and governments have led to this downfall. Greed, both corporate and individual, has become prominent throughout the world.

The end times' name used in the Book of **Revelation** to describe our world today is "Babylon." Although this will involve a literal place in the future during the Tribulation, this name is also used as the symbol of a godless world system, which will reach the pinnacle of God's wrath.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

God's chosen people, Israel, have been the center of attention in the world. The enemies of the Jewish people are clearly seen in the news through the spectrum of Biblical prophecy. But the evil ambitions of the nations who rage against God, His city and the Jewish people will one day be brought down. By comparing Biblical prophecy with current trends, it is evident that we are very near the end of this age. The Middle East problem today, with Israel in the midst of the Moslem nations (a place they are not

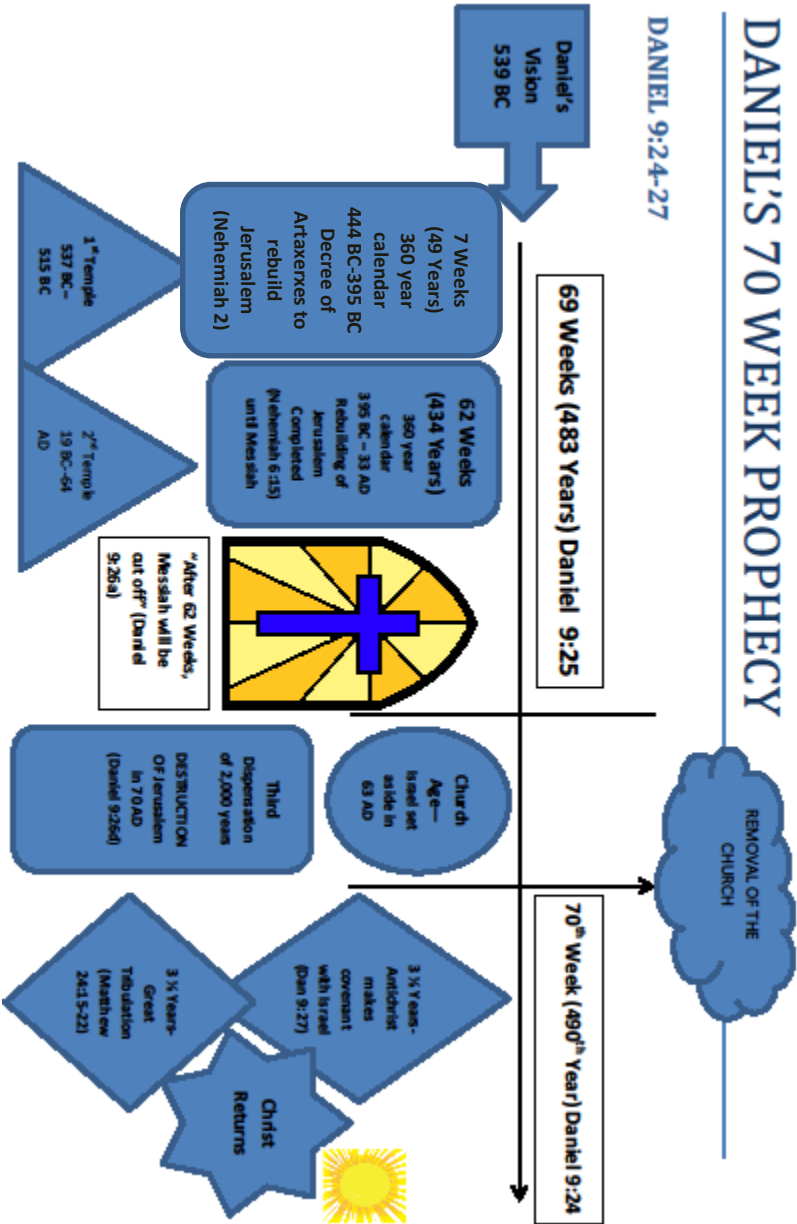
supposed to be until Christ Himself returns them to their land) exists because of Israel's disobedience (**Isaiah 1:2ff**, described as “*sick, wounded*”). Satan uses the surrounding Gentile nations, which are under his control, in his effort to destroy Israel.

This is why there is an escalating problem in the Middle East today, one in which the surrounding nations rage against Israel seeking to destroy her. This Middle East problem, along with the present worldwide economic turmoil, will end with Christ's return.

As Christians, our viewpoint should be quite different than that of the world. As we see these events unfolding and matters getting worse, we are to be joyful in a sense because of that which is to follow — the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and the removal of the Church. Our hearts should be saddened by the ungodliness of this dark world, yet we are to be excitingly joyful that God has a much better place prepared for those who love Him. And those who want to live godly lives in the midst of an evil world must be prepared for persecution and suffering. God does not promise us deliverance from persecution and suffering, but deliverance through it. He allows trials in order to develop our capacity to reign with Him in His kingdom. Through God, we can overcome adversity in our lives. We have much to look forward to, *if* we prepare ourselves and patiently endure.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEK PROPHECY

DANIEL 9:24-27



OUTLINE OF GOD'S PLANS

1. The original creation of the heavens and the earth (**Genesis 1:1**)
2. Satan's rebellion and fall along with a third of the angels (**Genesis 1:2a**)
3. The earth restored in 6 days, followed by a 7th day of rest (**Genesis 1:2b-2:25**)
4. Creation of man in the image and likeness of God on the 6th day (**Genesis 1:26-28**)
5. Satan's entrance into the Garden of Eden and the fall of man (**Genesis 3**)
6. God's covenant with Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel (**Genesis 11:31**)
7. The first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ (**Gospels: Matthew 1:16; John 1:14**)
8. The kingdom of heaven rejected by Israel, Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected and ascended; Old Testament saints resurrected [*Christ the firstfruits*] (**Matthew 23:13; 27:35, 51-53; 28:1; Acts 1:9; 1 Corinthians 15:23**)
9. The new creation in Christ, the Church formed (**Gospels: Matthew 16:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24**)
10. Removal of the Church to heaven; Day of the Lord in heaven (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 1:7-10**)
11. Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven (**2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 2-4**)
12. Seven year Tribulation on earth; Opening of the seven seals; the redemption of the inheritance (**Daniel 9:27; Revelation 6-18**)
 13. Ministry of the two witnesses during first half of the Tribulation (**Revelation 11:1-6**)
 14. The Antichrist revealed (**Daniel 7:8; Revelation 6:2-8**)
 15. Antichrist makes covenant with Israel; Israel rebuilds Holy Temple in Jerusalem (**Daniel 9:27, Amos 9:11, Acts 15:16**)
 16. Satan and his angels expelled from heaven and cast to the earth (**Revelation 12:7**)
 17. Great Tribulation begins; middle of the week (middle of 7 years); Antichrist breaks covenant with Israel; Antichrist sits in the Holy Temple and shows himself as God, known as the "abomination of desolation" (**Daniel 8:13, 14; 9:27; Revelation 13:15**)
 18. 144,000 Jews are sealed and preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world (**Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:1, 8**)
 19. Seven trumpet judgments of God (**Revelation 8:7-9:21; 11:15-19**)
 20. Reaping the Earth's Harvest: Judgment on the nations; fall of world powers and economies (**Joel 3:1-16; Revelation 14:14-16**)
 21. Reaping the Grapes of Wrath, which introduces the battle of Armageddon -- completing the wrath of God (**Revelation 14:17-20**)
 22. Antichrist, False Prophet, and the nations gather their armies together to prepare for the battle of Armageddon against Israel (**Revelation 16:14, 16**)
 21. Final fall of Babylon; Fall of Gentile world power (**Revelation 18:1-24**)
 22. The marriage festivities of the Lamb and His bride in heaven (**Revelation 19:6**)
 23. The second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; Day of the Lord on earth (**Revelation 19:11**)
 24. The nation of Israel restored to their land (**Isaiah 61, 62; Ezekiel 39:25-29**)
 25. The battle of Armageddon; Christ defeats Antichrist, False Prophet and their armies; Antichrist and False Prophet cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 19:17-21**)
 26. Christ defeats Satan and bounds him for 1000 years (**Revelation 20:1-3**)
 27. The Messianic Era begins; a dual kingdom established: on earth (God's wife, Israel) and in heaven (bride of Christ); both rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years (**Revelation 20:4**)
 28. After 1000 years, Satan released by God and deceives the nations once again (**Revelation 20:7, 8**)
 29. Great battle (Gog and Magog – Gentile nations of the entire earth) against Israel; Satan cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:8b-10**)
 30. The Great White Throne Judgment for the unsaved (**Revelation 20:11-15**)
 31. The earth and the heavens destroyed and all things made new: The New Jerusalem; The Eternal Ages beyond (**Revelation 21-22:5**)

CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN OVERCOMER

Introduction

The following is a summary of the previous chapters:

1. Man was *created* for a purpose --- to have dominion with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens over the earth.
2. Man was *saved* for the same purpose — to have dominion. As part of His redemptive plan for mankind, because of His love for His creation, God the Father offered His Son as the sacrificial Lamb in order to wipe away man's sins, to cleanse man, to offer man eternal life (salvation of the spirit), and to offer Christians an inheritance in Christ's kingdom (salvation of the soul). He left Christians the Holy Spirit as a guarantee to this offer, to guide them into all truth, so that they may be prepared with good works at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The moment one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is made alive in his spirit, his eternal salvation is secure; and through the act of baptism, he is born again.
3. The moment one is born again, he is entered into a race of faith, in which he will be tested throughout his life. If he endures and produces good works done through the power of the Holy Spirit, his soul will be saved (salvation of the soul) at the Judgment Seat of Christ and he will rule and reign in Christ's heavenly kingdom for one thousand years. On the other hand, if he produces works of the flesh during his lifetime, then at the Judgment Seat of Christ he will suffer loss and be cast out of the kingdom during the Millennium, a region known as "Outer Darkness." Apostate Christians will receive a stricter judgment, being cast to the lake of fire for one thousand years. The unsaved will remain down in Hades for one thousand years. Then, after the Millennium, they will be delivered to the Great White Throne Judgment where their works will inevitably cast them into the lake of fire burning with brimstone forever.

4. During the Millennium, Christ will set up His dual kingdom -- one on earth on the holy mountain in Jerusalem with the twelve tribes of Israel ruling and reigning over the nations; and one in heaven, where the bride of Christ (overcomers chosen from the Church) will rule and reign from heaven over the earth.

5. From the creation of Adam, man has been given six thousand years to dwell on the earth, be spiritually redeemed and work for their soul salvation. Pentecost marked the beginning of the third dispensation, lasting 2,000 years. At its completion, the Church will be removed to heaven and the Tribulation upon earth will begin. After seven years, Christ will return to earth to restore Israel, take down Gentile world power and begin His rule. After one thousand years, He will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father and then the Eternal Ages will begin and have no end. All Christians will now have a part in the New Jerusalem during the Eternal Ages.

6. From the creation of man until the present day, the close of six thousand years is approaching. The 7th day, the 3rd day, is very near. We are in the brink of the last days before the second return of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Realizing that the time is near when the Lord will return, what sort of person should we be? Where will we choose to spend the coming Millennium? If one chooses to overcome his life, he will have the peace of God regardless of the circumstances around him. Throughout his lifetime, various trials and tribulations may arise for the purpose of maturing his faith. But for most Christians, choosing to overcome is a road less traveled. Though Christians possess the capacity for spiritual perception, many choose to follow the soulical rather than the spiritual man. But if one endures the race of the faith, he will reap its rewards on that coming Day. This is the encouragement that Paul gave the Church in Galatia:

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Galatians 6:9)

What does it mean to be an overcomer? The meaning of the term *to overcome* is "to conquer", "to win a victory" or "to prevail." It refers to a contest or a conflict ending in victory.

With each of the seven Churches in **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three**, God ends His letter saying, “*to him who overcomes.*” The overcomers are a separate and distinct class of Christians for whom God offers special rewards and crowns. This clearly shows that not all Christians will overcome. There are carnal and spiritual Christians, faithful and unfaithful ones, overcomers and those who are overcome by the world, the flesh and the devil. Overcoming is a life-long process and only in active obedience through faith can one overcome.

1 John 5:3-5 says this:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world---our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The first step in overcoming is accomplished by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Second, it is accomplished by keeping His commandments, which can only be done in obedience through faith, allowing the Spirit to work through the Christian. He who believes in His Word of the coming kingdom and the possibility of sharing it with Him and he who acts in faithful obedience to His Word, it is he who overcomes.

By keeping our hearts and minds focused on the kingdom first, we have the ability to overcome the world. Although Jesus was persecuted and crucified, He kept His focus on the kingdom of His Father, anticipating His rewards, and therefore He overcame the world. He fulfilled His Father’s will and finished the work.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” (John 17:4)

A life to overcome means a life or soul to win; to have victory over. Another expression used is “*soul winning*.” Soul winning is *winning one’s life*. We are currently running a race to obtain victory of our soul. Because of Christ’s resurrection, He was able to conquer both Death and Hades for us. Death has no power over Christians, as we are able to participate in Christ’s victory. But we must also finish the work which God has given us to do in order to be awarded a glorious body as kings-priests and win our life in the age to come.

The race that Paul prepared himself for, the race that all Christians need to prepare themselves for is *the race of the faith*.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day (Day of the Lord--the Millennial Kingdom Age), and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

(2 Timothy 4:7, 8)

Like any race, the winner receives a prize. The prize that Paul strived for was for an imperishable crown in the kingdom of heaven. And like any race, not all are winners. Paul recognized that the loss of the victor’s crown was a very real possibility for any believer, regardless of his or her standing in the Christian community.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

(1 Corinthians 9:27)

Paul did not assume that he would win the race. He continued to discipline his body of flesh, and to fight against adversity, rejection and spiritual warfare. This clearly shows that not all Christians will win the race into the kingdom, but only those who truly remain steadfast in the faith. Faith in Scripture means “*believing what God has said*.” Paul called it “the faith” meaning to *believe what God has said pertaining to the message of the kingdom, of the inheritance*.

We have as our greatest example of an overcomer, Jesus Christ, whom we do well to follow:

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

The Book of **Hebrews** teaches Christians, during the course of their race, to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1, 2)

Jesus is our perfect example and role model. He focused on the joy that was set before Him. His attention was not on the agonies of the Cross, but on the crown; not on the suffering, but on the reward. The only way to model Christ is to know Him. And the only way Christians can have knowledge of Christ is through the study of His Word. Part of the Christian race in which we are presently entered has to do with going from immaturity to maturity (maturing in the knowledge of God's Word concerning the kingdom), so that we will be able to produce good works. Such works of faithful endurance produces what we see in **1 Peter 1:9**:

...receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

Maturing in the faith and producing good works through the Spirit is all a process and comes from reading and studying the Word of God.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

We must set aside time to read and study God's Word. Any distraction away from the goal will invariably result in straying off the course leading toward the goal. And Jesus said that a man who could not keep his eyes fixed on the goal is not fit for the kingdom of God.

But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Paul knew this and therefore did not wander back and forth; he had his eyes fixed on the goal and he never looked back:

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:13)

As a Christian, this race is not optional. The moment one is spiritually saved, he is entered into this race. If he ignores the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit and does not abide in God's Word, then he is setting himself up for doom and failure when his race is finished.

We must realize that there is purpose in our lives. God has given each and every Christian a future purpose and goal — the heavenly inheritance. If our mindset is fixed on the things of this world, then we are living a life without a care for our inheritance. But when our eyes are fixed on the goal of the kingdom, there we will find our true purpose and fulfillment. We can decide to get all our rewards here on earth which is short-lived, or we can choose to work for future rewards in the kingdom, that which is eternal.

Solomon drifted away from God during his lifetime, pursuing different ways to achieve temporary satisfaction. Only after many years of futile searching did he finally remember the true source of permanent fulfillment and peace: a sound relationship with God. Satisfaction can be found only in God and His purpose for us.

In the Book of **Ecclesiastes**, Solomon wrote:

So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor;

And this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:9-11)

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For
God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret
thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14)*

In the following chapters, examples will be extracted from the Old Testament and the New Testament of believers who overcame and those who were overcome. By studying these believers of the past, we are able to determine what it takes to obtain the characteristics of an overcomer.

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Let us therefore strive to achieve the salvation of our souls, keeping our focus fixed on Jesus and on the goal of the upward call. And let us move on with diligence in studying the characteristics of an overcomer.

CHAPTER FIVE – PART ONE

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Abiding in God’s Word can be proven difficult, especially when we experience trials and suffering. We may want to turn back and leave the uneasy, unpopular, narrow path for the comfortable, yet chaotic, familiar life of the world. Can I say that this is not the right choice to make?

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:39)

The Lord says if we endure, our rewards will be great in heaven (**Matthew 5:11, 12**). The Old Testament has numerous valuable testimonies of believers who were faithfully obedient to God. No matter what the cost or what the circumstances were, they were determined to stay faithful to God and to be obedient to His commands. They did this because they *believed everything He said and their eyes were fixed on a future inheritance in His kingdom, a much grander life yet to come*. They loved God with all their heart, soul and mind. God was their first love. This unconditional love and willing trust is that which pleases God. This is *faith* — believing what God has to say about a matter (The Greek word [Strong’s #G4102] for “faith” is *pistis* meaning “assurance, belief, reliance upon Christ for salvation; believing in the truthfulness of God”). But not all believers were faithfully obedient to God or endured until the end. This is what ultimately determines who will be the bride of Christ and who will not.

SECTION 1—GENESIS TO RUTH

Example 1) Adam and Eve

Genesis 2:21

After God created the earth (**Genesis 1:1**) and subsequently brought it into a ruined state because of Satan’s sin (**Genesis 1:2**), He then restored the earth (**Genesis 1:3-25**) prior to man’s creation with the specifically stated purpose of man having dominion over the earth (**Genesis 1:26**). Within these plans, man was created a little lower than the angels as he must prove himself worthy to replace the incumbent ruler, Satan. And man was

not made to rule alone. God made a “helper” for man, a woman. The Woman was taken out of the body of Adam. God caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam and then He opened his side, took a small portion of his body, a rib, out of which He formed Eve, Adam's bride. The Woman, who was bone of man's bones, and flesh of his flesh, had to rule with the man. When Eve sinned, having been deceived by Satan in accordance to her disobedience to God's Word, Adam cleaved unto his wife as *one flesh*, as a complete being. At this juncture, it would be correct to say that Adam *partook of sin* to effect Eve's redemption, with a view to both one day partaking of the tree of life together (**1Timothy 2:14**). Adam, as a type of Christ (**Romans 5:14**), was obedient to the commands of God, who remained with his bride and took on her sin. This is representative of Jesus Christ who was put to sleep (died on the Cross and took on our sins) before His side was also pierced to form the bride. All of the Church make-up the body of Christ, but only a certain few who will be found worthy will be taken out of the body (Church) to form the bride of Christ. And this follows the pattern of Eve being taken out of the body of Adam and becoming his bride. It presents a clear picture that only a selected group out of the body of the Church will qualify to be the bride of Christ. Therefore, Christ will also have a “helper” to rule with Him (**Hebrews 3:14**), as He would have to pattern the very thing that God established in the beginning, before the foundation of the world. This is the manner in which man is to rule in the future – Christ and His bride (those selected from the Church); and God and His wife, Israel.

However, the consequence for man's sin is made clear in **Genesis 2:17**:

“...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

There were two specifically stated trees in the Garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Both trees produced fruit. The distinction between them was in the consequence of eating from them. The tree of life produced life having to do with rulership and the other produced death. The tree of life was offered to provide Adam and Eve wisdom to be able to rule over the earth. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was more closely aligned with Satan, who became wise in his own eyes rather than being mindful of the things of God. Yet the woman went against God's commandments and instead followed the devil's advice when he said, “*You will not surely die.*” (**Genesis 3:4**)

So what died that day? The three parts of man were affected. Their spirit died, their soul became corrupted because of sin, and their body began to decay. This required action on God's part to deal with that death. Man no longer possessed the image and likeness of God because of their sin. Since God has no sin, they were no longer considered having the full likeness of Him. We see this in **Genesis 5:3:**

And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his (Adam's) own likeness, after his (Adam's) image, and named him Seth.

This is when God's plan of redemption came into effect. He clothed Adam and Eve's body with the coats of skin from animals, requiring *death and shed blood* (**Genesis 3:21**) as they had lost the covering of glory previously wrapping their bodies. In relation to man's redemption, no difference exists today from that which existed in the Garden of Eden almost 6,000 years ago.

Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to effect the Father's plans and purposes in respect of rulership. This is the reason Christ had to die in the flesh, *as death and shed blood* has always been God's means to satisfy man's redemption, otherwise there could be no redemption (**Hebrews 9:22**). Because of Christ's death, the spirit is reborn in the life of the believer; however the soul and body remain unredeemed until a future day. The salvation of the soul, a present work that will be realized in the future, requires *death and shed blood* as well, but now it is death in relation to the individual, or the "old man." And the salvation of the body has to do with a future adoption, as first-born sons, which deals part with the salvation of the soul and will be realized at the Judgment seat of Christ.

Even today, Satan deceives many using the same temptations: "*Has God indeed said?*" (**Genesis 3:1a**), and "*You will not surely die*" (**Genesis 3:4**). Christians need to realize that although their spirits will never die (Christ's finished work at Calvary), their soul and body does have that capability in the age to come. The good news is that Christians who overcome their present life can save their soul and body for the age to come. Overcoming is accomplished when Christians align themselves with the wisdom of God rather than that of the world, the flesh and the devil. In the age to come, *overcomers* will be glorified in the image and likeness of God.

Example 2) Cain and Abel
Genesis 4:1

The account of Adam's sons, Cain and Abel, portray an example of the man of flesh and the man of spirit. One was disobedient and the other faithful to God. Cain was the first-born with all rights of first inheritance, but he worshipped God through his own will and efforts rather than according to the will of God. Cain refused the sacrifice of God's substitute lamb, which Abel offered. Abel was faithfully obedient to the will of God and gave the correct offering.

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.
(Hebrews 11:4)

Both were to bring a “first-fruit” or “firstborn” offering to the Lord. Abel’s offering was a sacrifice of “*the firstborn of his flock and of their fat*” (**Genesis 4:4**). His sacrifice was acceptable to God because of His faithful obedience, and he was therefore declared righteous (**Hebrews 11:4**). Cain, however, offered his sacrifice apart from faith, on his own terms, without following God’s instructions. This example has to do with the salvation of the soul, which requires one to follow God by faith; i.e., simply believing God’s Word and faithfully obeying His Word. In doing so, the result will be works executed through the power of the Holy Spirit and not through fleshly desires.

Cain typifies Israel, who is God's first-born son, who not only had the promises of the land, but also the heavenly promises of the kingdom. However, Israel refused to abide in God's commandments, refused the offer of the heavenly kingdom and also refused the substitute Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Cain allowed sin (the flesh, the world and the devil) to control his actions and therefore God did not accept him. Abel was accepted by the Lord to be the seed by which Christ would come.

Out of anger, Cain killed his brother who was innocent of any crime. This was Satan’s first attempt to interrupt the arrival of the Seed. In the same way, Israel killed his Brother, Jesus Christ, who committed and knew no sin. Therefore, Cain was cursed because of his sin, and so was Israel. But God forbade anyone to kill Cain and forbade anyone to exterminate the

nation of Israel, because He alone will deal with Israel in the future and His plans and promises will come to pass to restore and redeem them. Cain's portion of his inheritance was to be an earthly one. Likewise, the nation of Israel in the Millennium will have an earthly inheritance.

The blood of Abel crying out from the ground (a cursed ground) is representative of the blood of Christ *speaking better things than that of Abel* (Christ, who died and shed His blood, able to redeem not only man but also to ultimately redeem the ground from which Abel's blood had cried (**Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 12:24**). After Abel died, Adam and Eve bore Seth, who would replace Abel as the seed by which Christ came.

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord. (Genesis 5:25, 26)

Like Cain and Abel, Christians are being tested today. Only those that are faithfully obedient to God's Word will actually obtain their offered inheritance. Christians are sons of God with all rights of primogeniture to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Will we choose to be like Abel or Cain? Will we be faithful to God's commands, die to self, and allow the Holy Spirit to work through us until the end? Or will we be like Cain, refusing to do God's will and instead choosing to do what's right in our own eyes. Cain was a believer, but he allowed Satan to control his body of flesh. Cain lived for the world and not for God. Therefore, he was overcome by the world, the flesh, and the devil. Abel, on the other hand, did not conform to the world but loved God, so that it showed by his obedience to God's commands.

We also love God *if* we keep His commandments, allowing the Spirit to work through us. Do not be deceived. Unconditional love for Him is not based on our warm and fuzzy feelings (because they do change day to day!). If we think feelings for God are all we need, then we will be deceived into thinking we can do whatever we want. The Word says you do not love the Lord if you do not keep His commandments. This is the love that God wants, that we keep His commandments and abide in Him (His Word) and He in us (His Spirit in us). We must abide in His Word daily.

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”
(John 15:9, 10)

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” **(1 John 5:3)**

“I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” **(John 15:5, 6)**

“Abide” is the Greek word (G3306) "meno" which means “to continue; to endure; to remain.” If we remain in His Word and act accordingly on a daily basis, then we are producing good works for the saving of our soul. But if we do not abide in His Word, then we are cast out at the Judgment Seat, where our works will be tested through fire and will be burned. We will suffer loss outside the kingdom during the Messianic Era. Without Him, without His Word, we cannot produce any good works. *Good works* are those according to His Word, done through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Example 3) Enoch **Genesis 5:21**

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.
(Genesis 5:24)

Very few words are mentioned about Enoch in Scripture, but what is clearly revealed is that Enoch is a type of the Church, i.e., the bride of Christ. The basic meaning of the Hebrew word *halak* (H1980) translated *walk* is "to go; exercise self; continually." It is a continual act of motion in obedience to God's commands; a constant relationship with God. Enoch had a life-long personal relationship with God. He remained faithful and obedient to God for three hundred years and then God raptured him to heaven. Enoch's remarkable experience is a hopeful reminder that those who "*walk with God*" can look forward to the same experience --- their

rapture and reward. In the Old Testament, only Enoch and Elijah were raptured by God to heaven.

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, 'and was not found, because God had taken him'; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:5)

Enoch pleased God with his faith. Enoch believed in God, diligently sought Him, and trusted that He would reward him in the end. Enoch knew God and the consequence for not following Him.

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.' (Jude 14, 15)

During the seventh generation, Enoch was removed from the earth alive. The number "seven" is a significant number in the Word and means "completion for that which is in view." This typifies a man being removed from the earth at a "complete period of time." Enoch was raptured before the Flood began (a time of God's judgment which fell upon all those who remained on the earth). And this typifies the Church being removed from the earth to heaven at the end of this dispensation before the Tribulation begins, which will be a time of God's judgment upon the entire world for a period of seven years. Like Enoch, all those during this present dispensation who believe in the Lord will be raptured to heaven before the *flood* ("overflowing judgment") begins. Furthermore, all those who believe in the Lord and are faithfully obedient to His Word until the end will receive the reward of the inheritance.

Example 4) Noah

Genesis 6:8

In the tenth generation from Adam, after Enoch was raptured to heaven,

God's judgment upon the entire wicked world transpired and He destroyed all man because of their transgressions, all except Noah and his family.

A corruption of the human race was Satan's goal at this time for the purpose of preventing man from ascending the throne and taking over his position. Satan's effort was to corrupt that which God had established in the beginning — a husband/wife relationship within the human realm—the manner in which man was to conduct his rule over the earth. Angels, however, had completely different principles in relation to the government of the earth. In the angelic realm, angels did not marry, a principle set forth by God prior to man's creation (**Matthew 22:30**). Therefore, the cohabitation of the sons of God (fallen angels) with the daughters of men in **Genesis 6:1-4** (known as the “giants” or “Nephilim”) was Satan's efforts to destroy that which God had established in order to prevent man from ruling in his place:

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

This corruption caused by the fallen angels before Noah's day was Satan's second attempt to prevent the coming of the “Seed of the woman” (Christ) foretold in **Genesis 3:15**:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

The fallen angels procreated strange hybrid offspring with human women, known as the “Nephilim” (Strong's #H5303 & H7497: Hebrew word *Nepil* & *Rapa*: meaning “to fall” and “tyrant”—a giant), also referred to in the Bible as “giants,” “mighty men,” “Rapha or Rephaim,” and “sons of Anak.” They were demons, monsters of iniquity; and being superhuman in size and wicked in character, had to be destroyed. In response, God reserved these fallen angels for special judgment (**2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6**) and cleansed the earth with the Flood.

Noah, however, found favor with God, because during this generation Noah was the only one who “walked with God.” Only Noah and his

family had preserved their pedigree pure from Adam (**Genesis 6:9**). Therefore, God commanded Noah to build an ark to save him, his family and two of every sort of animal as to God's specifications. And Noah obeyed the Lord fully, without question or hesitation.

But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark...Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did. (Genesis 6:18, 22)

Noah typifies a remnant of Israel, whom God protected in an ark during the Flood — and this worldwide destruction typifies the seven year Tribulation. God will protect a faithful remnant during the Great Tribulation (**Matthew 24:15, 16; Revelation 12:14**). When Christ returns, He will redeem Israel back into their land and the whole of Israel will be restored.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

Noah was warned by God that destruction would come upon the whole world. Noah took God's word seriously and with godly fear. He feared for his and his family's salvation and this motivated him to abide by God's commands. In the antitype, Christ gives ample warning to Israel (**Matthew 24:15, 16**) by providing events which will occur at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. The Antichrist will sit in the Most Holy Place proclaiming to be God. When this occurs, they are told to *flee to the mountains* where God will provide a safe haven for them.

But many *in the days of Noah* paid little attention to the Lord and, as a result, faced destruction. The exact scenario will be the case at Christ's return.

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage,

until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all...Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke 17:26, 27, 30)

When the Lord returns to take down Satan and his armies, the world will be exactly as it was in the days of Noah — the Nephilims will again surface and man will be going about their wicked ways. The unique events leading to the Flood are a prerequisite to understanding the prophetic implications of our Lord's predictions regarding His Second Coming. By and through the Word of God, we have been warned concerning *all things* to come. Therefore, we are to move with godly fear, separating ourselves from this world and preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord.

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Matthew 24:42)

The unholy alliance between the fallen angels and human women is believed to have happened both before the Flood and after the Flood, as we see recorded in **Genesis 6:4**,

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

In **Genesis 6:4**, note the words “*and also afterward.*” This implies that there were two incidents of co-habitation by Satan's seed --- one before Noah's time and another after the Flood. The first incident transpired through the lineage of Enoch, Cain's son (Cain was cursed by God as a vagabond and sent out from the presence of the Lord). The second incident transpired through the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah. Ham's son, Canaan, was cursed because of his actions and the actions of his father. Ham had entered Noah's tent and had dishonored his father. The incident was an act of disgrace and disgust, a sign of his wickedness.

Then he said: “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.” (Genesis 9:25)

This was yet another attempt by Satan to corrupt the lineage of Adam. Through the descendants of Ham, a race of giants once again populated the earth and cohabitated with human women. The Nephilim's were born from the descendants of Ham, specifically of his sons, Cush (Cush begot Nimrod, “*the mighty one on the earth*”), Mizraim (Mizraim begot six sons

from whom came the Philistines [**Genesis 10:13**] as in Goliath the giant), Canaan (Canaan begot the Jebusites, the Amorites and all the families of the Canaanites to include the Rephaim [**Genesis 10:15-18, 20**] from whom the Anakims or sons of Anak [**Deuteronomy 2:11; Numbers 13:28, 29, 33; Joshua 15:14**] and King Og descended [**Deuteronomy 3:11**]), and Put (from the region of Libya (**Ezekiel 27:10**) or Africa today. His descendants were known as Libyans or Chub (**Ezekiel 30:5**) and were called “*mighty men*” (meaning ‘giants’) in **Jeremiah 46:9**, together with the descendants of Cush (Ethiopians).

These giants dwelt all over the world and ruled over great cities. The people worshiped them as gods and had many names, such as the Sumerian god “Enki” (from Anak), the Annunuki god, the god Baal (Baalim), Ashtaroth (**Judges 10:6**) and many more. The ancient Greeks, the Egyptians, the Hindus, the South Sea Islanders, the Incas Indians, and most all others across the world have echoed these evil giants. The Book of **Jude** speaks of them; **Jude 14** records the prophecy of Enoch concerning their future judgment. Even today, apostates wander all over the earth performing the works of Satan, worshiping these ancient gods (giants) and doing all kinds of evil in the sight of the Lord.

Example 5) Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 12:1

In order to properly understand the fashion in which God set forth His plans and purposes, one simply calls attention to the types and the antitypes, leaving the matter to rest upon the foundation of Scripture itself. We will see with Abraham and his family, all were types covering the complete story pertaining to God’s plans. Beginning with Abraham as a type of God, then his wife, Sarah, as a type of Israel; his son, Isaac, as a type of Christ; his servant, Eleizer, as a type of the Holy Spirit; and Isaac’s bride, Rebekah, as a type of the bride of Christ. And part of God’s plan of redemption for man centers around His covenant with Abraham.

God tells Abraham to leave his country and his father's house and go to the land of Canaan where he would receive his inheritance.

Now the Lord had said to Abram:

“Get out of your county, from your family and from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
(Genesis 12:1-3)

The land of Canaan was already populated with the giants, a land that God would give to Abraham as an inheritance. Satan’s plan was to occupy Canaan with “his own seed” in advance of Abraham’s seed. For when Abraham and His people entered Canaan, we read in **Genesis 12:6c**, “*And the Canaanites [giants] were then in the land.*”

Believing in all that God had said, Abraham obeyed and took his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot. This represents God’s calling to Christians whereby they are to focus and move *by faith* from the land of their birth towards the land of their calling, the heavenly land.

—just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Galatians 3:6, 7)

Through Abraham’s lineage, all Christians will be blessed with the offer of the promised inheritance. Because Christ came through the lineage of Abraham, and Christians are “in Christ,” then they are part of the seed of Abraham and have the rights to the promised future inheritance.

And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

However, once Abraham arrived in the Land of Canaan and realized that the giants were already in the land, he went into the land but later moved from there, journeying toward “the south.” This is a pictorial representation of a Christian’s journey to the land of his calling, where trials and tribulations arise as a testing of his faith in the Lord. Abraham’s faith was tested continually by the Lord in order that he would mature. It took nearly sixty years before Abraham was ready to be faithfully

obedient in all that God commanded.

God told Abraham that he would have a son from his own body and that his descendants would be great. Yet Abraham's wife, Sarah, was barren. Sarah thought that the Lord had restrained her from conceiving because she was up in age and had not borne any children. Sarah's desperate ploy to have a child resulted in Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, becoming the surrogate mother for Sarah. So Abraham had a son called Ishmael through Hagar and God said He would multiply her descendants as well. However they would be a "wild" group, unsettled and always at war, ultimately to fulfill God's plans and purposes.

And the Angel of the Lord said to her: "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son, You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard your affliction.

He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (Genesis 16:11)

This has indeed been the case today, for Ishmael's descendants are the Arab peoples who populate most of the Middle East. Very few of the peoples of the Old Testament have survived to our own day. For example, we see in **Genesis 15:19-21** that all ten nations mentioned have ceased to exist. But two peoples survive: Israel, the Jewish people, descended from Isaac; and the Arabs, descended from Ishmael -- exactly as God had planned it to be.

God declared Isaac the son of promise, the one who would inherit the kingdom. After God gifted Abraham and Sarah with their son, Isaac, God commanded the sacrificial offering of Isaac in **Genesis 22:1**. And this typifies God's offering of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the sacrificial Lamb; as the Substitute for the sins of the world.

This time, Abraham fully obeyed God's command without hesitation. Abraham believed in all that God told him. He believed God's covenant with him concerning his blessings of the land and his people. He believed God when He said,

"But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." (Genesis 17:21)

When God commanded him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, Abraham knew this would be a test of his faithful obedience to God and that *"The-Lord-Will-Provide."* He believed in God's promises and that He would raise up Isaac from the dead.

By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "

In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

We will remember that Abraham is a type of God the Father and Isaac a type of Jesus, the Son of God. Abraham was willing to sacrifice His son just as God the Father sacrificed His Son, both on the *third* day. Abraham went on a *three days journey* to the mount and traveled back three days, a total of six days, which is "Man's Day. The number "three" in Scripture is a significant number symbolizing "resurrection; divine completion." On the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and came up to the mountain where God had told him to go to sacrifice Isaac. But God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, as He provided a substitute lamb in Isaac's place to satisfy the shedding of blood as the sacrifice for redemption; to satisfy God's test of faith to Abraham for the offering of the covenant. Figuratively, Isaac died that day. Then, they arose and returned together. And this typifies God sacrificing His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Substitute Lamb without blemish, to save the world from sin and for the offering of the new covenant to the "seed" of Abraham (Israel and the Church) for the inheritance of the Millennial kingdom. The difference with Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb is that Christ wiped away the sins of the world completely, whereas before, the shedding of blood of an animal sacrificed by man only covered sin.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in the tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

By faith, Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead (the sacrifice of Isaac) were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11:8-12)

Because of our positional standing in Christ, we Christians are part of Abraham's seed and therefore connected to Abraham's son, Isaac — the son of the free woman and not through Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman. We will realize that our first birth, that which is born of the flesh is in opposition to God. Nothing connected with our first birth, the son of the bondwoman, will have any inheritance in the kingdom. Only that emanating from our second birth, the son of the free woman, being born again in the Spirit, will have an offered heavenly inheritance. And this is what is presented here with Sarah and Hagar.

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (Galatians 4:30)

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. (John 6:63)

After Abraham and Isaac returned from the mountain, Sarah died. Again we will remember that Sarah, the wife of Abraham is a type of Israel, the wife of God (**Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20**). This typifies Israel's death in a figurative sense, as they were set aside temporarily upon their rejection and crucifixion of Christ.

After Sarah died, Abraham began to seek a bride for his son, Isaac; after Israel was set aside, God formed the one new man in Christ, the Church, and sent the Holy Spirit to procure a bride for His Son, Jesus Christ. Eleazar, Abraham's servant, was to seek the bride for Isaac only out of the family of Abraham. And since Pentecost, God's Servant, the Holy Spirit,

is seeking to procure a bride for Christ out from the family of God, the Church.

When Abraham's servant (a type of the Holy Spirit) finds Rebekah at the well, he immediately begins to speak of his master, Abraham, and presents her with some of his master's goods to show her that the chosen wife of Isaac would *inherit* with him. Likewise, the Holy Spirit reveals to Christians through the Word everything surrounding the coming kingdom and the rewards ready to be given to those who are faithful. The Holy Spirit is in the world today showing Christians all the glories which the Father will give to His Son and His Son's co-heirs. Note that Abraham's servant gives *precious things* to Rebekah's brother and to her mother as well. The Holy Spirit gives to *all* Christians the things of God through His Word, but not all Christians will receive Him and make the journey.

After Abraham's servant had procured a bride for Isaac, his instructions were to return to his master with the bride. Once God's allotted time is up for the search of a bride for His Son, then He will raise those "*in Christ*" by the power of the Holy Spirit and bring them to Him. Therefore, Eliezer arose the next morning ready to make the journey back, but Rebekah's brother and mother tries to detain her. Likewise, carnal Christians can have an impact on the Holy Spirit's work, as they try to hinder others from making that life journey of faithful obedience. Rebekah had to choose whether to go with Abraham's servant to be the bride of Isaac. Likewise, a Christian has to decide whether or not he will follow the Holy Spirit till the end. So the question is asked of Rebekah, "*Will you go with this man?*" (**Genesis 24:58**) And she said, "*I will go.*"

It is remarkable to see that every detail of these events was arranged in God's perfect order, presenting a perfect word-picture of the Christian's calling and of things yet to come.

Abraham's servant removed the bride along with her damsels. *All of them together* rode on *ten* camels to meet Isaac. Therefore, Rebekah and her damsels leaving on the *ten* camels shows *ordinal completion*, as the number "*ten*" in Scripture denotes "*all*." *All* went to meet Isaac, but *only Rebekah* was later presented to Isaac as his bride. In the antitype, *all* Christians will be removed and will be presented to Christ, but only the chosen will be His bride, and crowned as His consort queen.

It is interesting to note that the location in which Isaac and Rebekah meet was between his home and her home and then they proceeded to his home. And this typifies the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church meeting in the air between heaven and earth and then proceeding to heaven to the wedding hall, where a white garment must be worn (which is the righteous act of the saints) in order to enter the wedding banquet.

As Rebekah and Isaac approach each other, Rebekah puts a veil over her face. This typifies that judgment must occur before the bride is revealed and a wedding garment must be worn showing righteous acts; showing those who have passed the test of fire and have been chosen worthy in the Son's presence. The test is administered when Abraham's servant proceeds to tell Isaac all the positive things that transpired concerning Rebekah. The wedding is then automatically consummated. Likewise, the bride of Christ will make up those Christians who responded positively to the Spirit's mission as Rebekah did. And it was on the seventh day that Isaac presented his bride, just as Christ will present His bride on that coming Seventh Day. After the marriage of his son, Abraham remarries. This typifies God's remarriage to Israel when Israel will be restored to her land again to reign over the nations on earth during the Millennium.

And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had (Hagar and Keturah typifies Israel); and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east."
(Genesis 25:5)

In the antitype, God will give the grand share of the inheritance to His Son, Christ Jesus and His bride. He will also give the earthly land to Israel as their inheritance. Therefore, this typifies the bride of Christ inheriting the heavenly kingdom and God's wife, Israel, inheriting the earthly kingdom. The accounts of Abraham and his family are examples set for us today. The Day will come when the bride of Christ will be chosen (called out from "the called" or Church) and those who are ready and have their wedding garment on will be the ones who made the decision in this life to follow Him to the end, through faithful obedience.

We have a choice. *Will you go with this Man?* Every Christian has a choice whether he will follow the Holy Spirit and make the journey to the meet the Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals

them to the Christian. In and through the study of God's Word, one will mature in the knowledge of God leading to his transformation and assisting him in his journey to meet the Lord.

Example 6) Lot and his wife

Genesis 19:1

Lot is the example of an unfaithful Christian, the man of flesh. He represents all those who are saved but live for self (carnal; fleshly). His uncle, Abraham, is the example of a faithful Christian, who does good works pleasing to God. While Abraham made the choice to walk with God, Lot drifted away from the Lord and became a carnal Christian, even though he traveled with Abraham and had seen the works of God. He moved away from Abraham and made the choice to become involved in the world. And this is exactly what is happening today just before Christ's return. The unfaithfulness and wickedness of Christians today, which counterpart the works of Lot, will ultimately result in loss. Lot was eternally saved, but lost his inheritance.

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Even so will it be in the Day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that Day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away.

And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. (Luke 17:28-33)

In **Genesis 13:10, 11**, there was conflict between Abraham's and Lot's herdsmen. Therefore, Abraham peacefully offered Lot his choice of the land so that the herdsmen could be divided up amongst them. Because Lot was carnally minded, he chose the land of Jordan for its rich soil and flowing water. And the same is done so much in the world today, as Christians become so involved in the things of this world rather than the things of God. So we find in **Genesis 13:12** that Lot settled in the city of Sodom, the city of self-centered ambitions, wickedness and fleshly lusts.

Because of Lot's presence in the city of Sodom and because he held office there, he lost his testimony for the Lord. He was not walking in the ways of the Lord so when he spoke of the coming judgment to his sons-in-law, they thought he was peculiar and did not believe him. Although he was a hearer of the Word, he failed to be a doer of the Word.

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

But he who looks into the perfect (mature) law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

Abraham, the man of the Spirit, did the opposite of Lot, for he did not settle in Sodom, but rather moved his tent to the city of Hebron in the Land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to give his descendants as an inheritance, and there he built an altar for the Lord.

Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels warned Lot to get out of the city and flee to the mountains with his family. His sons-in-law perished because of their unbelief. Lot, his wife and two daughters escaped, but Lot's wife looked back (apostatized) and became a pillar of salt. Though she was delivered from Sodom, she lost her life for the age to come. This account forms a type of the future rapture of all Christians before the Tribulation and their subsequent judgment.

In **Luke 17:32**, Jesus had been talking to his disciples concerning His appearing and His judgment. He told them to *remember Lot's wife*, because although she was delivered from the city of Sodom, her heart and soul were for the things in Sodom (a type of the world). When Jesus told His disciples to remember Lot's wife, He was warning them of the possibility that although they would be raptured, they could lose their rewards during the Millennial reign of Christ if they also looked back.

When Jesus told His disciples to remember Lot's wife, He was warning them against the possibility of neglecting the hope of His return and therefore not watching till the end.

Jesus spoke numerous times to his disciples about being ready at any moment for His return and to watch. Lot's wife did not keep her eyes fixed on the kingdom of heaven, because she looked back. She believed in the coming judgment and was obedient when they told her to flee, but she was more mindful of the things of the world.

What does it mean when Lot's wife was changed to a pillar of salt? Every reference in the Bible about salt is good. Salt is a preservative and was a commanded ingredient to be used in the Levitical sacrifices. Lot's wife being changed to a pillar of salt seems to signify that she was preserved until the Eternal Ages; her spirit was saved, but her soul-life was not saved during the Kingdom Age. She would suffer loss because of her unfaithfulness. Every Christian has the potential to fall back if they do not have their eyes fixed on Christ's return. If one falls back, they too will be "preserved" like a pillar of salt for one thousand years. For this reason Jesus said to His disciples, "*Remember Lot's wife.*"

In that Day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life (in this world or age) will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it (in the Kingdom Age to come). (Luke 17:31-33)

When God instructed Lot to escape to the mountains, Lot disobeyed and pleaded to be sent to a small city east of the Jordan called Zoar (H6819, meaning "be brought low") with his two daughters. Lot failed to realize the salvation of his soul. He found himself dwelling in a cave outside of the Lord's presence (outside of the kingdom, i.e. God's temple). Abraham, on the other hand, found himself dwelling in the presence of the Lord and standing by His side.

The account of Lot and his family makes two things quite clear. First, it reveals that *all* Christians, whether faithful or unfaithful, will be removed prior to the Tribulation. Second, issues surrounding ones faithfulness or unfaithfulness will be determined following the rapture, at the Judgment seat of Christ. Upon these determinations, one will either be found in the presence of the Lord or outside the presence of the Lord.

Example 7) Jacob and Esau
Genesis 25:23

Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys, Esau and Jacob. God revealed to Rebekah which of her sons would be His elect before they were even born. He told her while her twins were in her womb struggling which one would follow his father's footsteps and be blessed with the birthright of the inheritance.

And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23)

And not only this, but when Rebekah also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil,

that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger. As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." (Romans 9:10)

And so it happened that Esau grew to be a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a humble and mild man, dwelling in tents as Abraham did. Esau and Jacob had contrasting temperaments and interests similar to those of Cain and Abel. Esau, as the firstborn, had a birthright to a double portion of the family estate. Moreover, he inherited from his father, Isaac, the privilege of an everlasting covenant with God. But Esau had no respect for this sacred covenant or for his birthright. And it came to pass that when he came in from the field, exhausted and hungry, that he sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?"

Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright." (Genesis 25:31-34)

Esau considered his birthright of little value and sold it to his younger brother, Jacob, to satisfy a fleshly desire. Like Esau, there are carnal Christians today that dismiss the importance of this inheritance that God has promised to the seed of Abraham (in which we have become a part of).

"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

Neglecting this inheritance of the kingdom has immutable consequence in the age to come. There will be no room for repentance at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Carnal Christians will be cast out into the outer darkness with shame and regret. For *"how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3)* The answer is "we won't."

God is just. He will give a just recompense of reward when all Christians are judged. We will get exactly what we deserve. Esau knew later the wrong that he had done and regretted it, but it was too late. He had lost his inheritance.

...lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. (Hebrews 12:16, 17)

And like Esau, this will be the fate of many unfaithful Christians when they stand in front of the throne of Christ and be rejected from the inheritance.

"And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:30)

Do not be deceived into thinking that we are immune to judgment and that we can go about our business as we desire. How we live our life right now matters. We can eat our bread and stew, drink and go our way every

day without one thought of all of this or we can choose to receive God's Word and live differently from now on. The first will bring dire consequence and the last will yield reward. The choice is ours.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.
(Hebrews 12:28)

Example 8) Jacob and Rachel
Genesis 29:1

After Jacob received the blessings from his father Isaac, Esau was furious and wanted to kill him. Therefore, Rebekah tells Jacob to leave their home and go to her brother Laban's house in another city called Haran. When he reached their land, he saw a well in the field and approached it. There he sees Rachel and it was love at first sight. He had heard the story of his mother's encounter at the well with Abraham's servant many times. He knew this meeting with Rachel was a blessing from God. So he kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. He became Laban's servant, a shepherd of Laban's sheep, and worked for Rachel for seven years (a complete period of time). However, Jacob had to marry Leah, the older daughter of Laban first because of the custom of the Jews in that she was the firstborn. Leah typifies the law, the earthly people, and just as Christ's ministry was to the Jew first, Jacob had to marry Leah first. Rachel typifies the gospel, the heavenly people, so she would be second in line. So Jacob served another seven years for Rachel, and then he left Laban's home and took his family back to his father's house in the land of Canaan.

In the antitype, the Holy Spirit is working for a complete period of time to procure a bride from the Church. The heavenly portion of the kingdom was offered to the Jews first: *"Thus says the Lord: Israel is My son, My firstborn."* **(Exodus 4:22)**. Then the kingdom was offered to the Church following Israel's rejection.

Leah typifies Israel and Rachel typifies the Church. Jacob had to work seven years for each bride, a complete period of time — *"to the Jew first and then to the Greek."* The number "seven" in Scripture means "a

complete period of time for that which is in view.” Jacob therefore typifies Christ, coming in the form of a bondservant and working for a complete period of time to win Himself His bride. When the work of procuring a bride is complete, then the Church will be raptured, Christ will return for His bride, and take her to His Father's house in the kingdom of heaven. And just as Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, so Christ Jesus loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her.

This is a complete word-picture of God's plan in the search for the bride of Christ. After Christ ascended to heaven, the “one new man in Christ” was created, no longer Jew or Gentile — faith in Christ superseded the law, which is why Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah.

Example 9) Joseph **Genesis 37:1**

Jacob loved Joseph the most of all his twelve sons because he was the oldest of the two who were born from Rachel. This is a picture of the unique relationship between God the Father and God the Son, especially as we would see it during the Lord's first advent with Jesus having been begotten during His Father's “*old age*.” He made Joseph a tunic of many colors when he was seventeen years old, which led to the jealousy of his brothers. The tunic represented favoritism, first in line to acquire the inheritance. Within this picture, Joseph's brothers typify the nation of Israel who nationally hated Christ “*for his dreams and for his words*.”

Joseph's dream looked forward to the day when his brothers in the land of Egypt during the seven years of famine would bow down before him, but looked forward even further to that Day when Israel, whom the brothers picture, will bow down and acknowledge the dominion of their brother Christ — the One whom they mistreated and sold into the hands of the Gentiles. When they were away from their father's house, the brothers sold Joseph to some Ishmaelites who were passing by on their way to Egypt.

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. And thy sat down to eat a

meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.”

And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. (Genesis 37:23-28)

The account of Joseph pictures for us a 2000 year history from the Lord's death, burial and resurrection to the forthcoming seven year Tribulation. The stripping of Joseph of his tunic is a picture of Christ's humiliation before His crucifixion, recorded in **Matthew 27:28, 29:**

And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

The empty pit with no water into which Joseph was cast is a picture of Christ in the place of the dead. We also see Joseph being sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver, a picture of the very thing that Jeremiah prophesied would happen with Jesus when He was betrayed.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.” (Matthew 27:9, 10; cf Jeremiah 32:6-9)

This was a picture of Judas Iscariot's actions, one of the twelve disciples, who sought to betray his Brother for a small price of 30 pieces of silver, recorded in **Matthew 26:14-16**. And the Ishmaelites bearing spices, balm

and myrrh was a picture of the spices used for Jesus' body after he was placed in the tomb (**Mark 16:1**).

The brothers went back to their father's house and told him that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. They showed him the tunic that they had taken from Joseph and had covered in goat's blood. Jacob mourned for days as Joseph was his favorite.

The Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt and sold him as a slave to an officer of Pharaoh. But God protected Joseph and gave him the gift of prophecy in dreams and the ability to interpret them. And Joseph prospered in everything he did. So his master, the Egyptian officer, noticed that the Lord had blessed Joseph. And because of this, the officer made him an overseer of his household, all that he had. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

And it came to pass that the wife of the master Egyptian had eyes for Joseph because he was handsome. She made passes at him several times, but Joseph refused because he was loyal to his master and to the commandments of God.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8, 9)

Joseph was faithful to his master and did not give in to temptation. His master trusted Joseph with his entire household, had blessed him, and was expecting Joseph to serve diligently, with loyalty in return. Likewise, Christ was faithful to His Father in doing His will. Because of this, the Father made Him ruler over His entire household (although He is not exercising this rule at the present time). And from the time Christ ascended to heaven, He has entrusted Christians with all of His goods, His Word and the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught His disciples about this in the parable of the faithful and evil servant, when He said,

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants,

and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 24:45-51)

Jesus is speaking to Christians in this parable because He calls them "servants." God is the master who has entrusted Christians to serve His household, the family of God, i.e. the Church, by teaching them the meat of the Word. The meat of the Word is the higher knowledge surrounding Christ's second return and His millennial reign. It is important to rightly divide the Word of God concerning milk and meat doctrines. They are distinctly different and understanding them is a major part of correctly understanding Scripture. Plainly, milk is the doctrine concerning Jesus' first coming, which is the gospel of grace — belief in Christ for the salvation of the spirit with eternal verities in view. Then, meat is the doctrine that speaks of the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom, which is the gospel of glory (also called the gospel of Christ or gospel of the kingdom) with millennial verities in view.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection... (Hebrews 5:13-6:1)

After one has been given the gospel of grace and has believed in Christ, God says that he *must* move on to maturity in the Word pertaining to the message of the kingdom and refrain from repeating the elementary

principles of Christ. And the reason why one needs to move on to maturity is because the full knowledge concerning the kingdom to come prepares him for Christ's return. Otherwise, he will not have a full understanding and this will lead to confusion in the Scriptures and a life not prepared for Christ. He will be like the evil servant whose heart is not seeking Christ's return, but living a carnal life blinded by the world and its lusts. He will be deceived into thinking that "*My Master is delaying His coming*" (**2 Peter 3:4**), and will continue to eat, drink and play as if nothing of significance is going to happen. A Scriptural warning to "*watch out!*" is given for one who lives this way. The Lord will come as a thief in the night and he will not expect Him. The consequence will be dire.

After Joseph had resisted his master's wife, she plotted against him by telling her husband that it was Joseph who made passes at her. So the master put him in prison. But the Lord showed mercy towards Joseph and blessed him there. God put a desire in the keeper of the prison to befriend Joseph, thereby giving him authority over all the other prisoners. While he was in prison, he interpreted the prisoners' dreams they were having with the condition that the prisoners would make mention of this to Pharaoh so that Joseph would be released from prison. After two years went by, the Pharaoh also had a dream and a former prisoner remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. So the Pharaoh released Joseph and he interpreted Pharaoh's dream precisely.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God? Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you.

You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." (**Genesis 41:38-40**)

Within the overall type we have covered the rejection, death, burial and now resurrection of Christ. After Pharaoh rewarded Joseph to be co-heir, he gave him Asenath, an Egyptian, to be his Gentile bride. Joseph, who is a type of Christ, was exalted to the right hand of the ruler, taking a bride of Gentile lineage. And Joseph's brothers who plotted to kill him typify the nation of Israel, who also plotted to kill their brother Jesus. But God's plan through His Son will be to redeem the nation of Israel and to save the

remnant out of the Tribulation, just as Joseph saved his brothers from the famine and tribulation that struck the entire ancient world.

The picture of Asenath as Joseph's Gentile bride follows the picture of death, burial and resurrection — a time of plenty. The seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine picture for us two complete periods of time. The years of plenty is associated with Man's Day, specifically the last 2000 years of this dispensation. Then the period of time associated with the seven years of famine typifies the Tribulation, *the time of Jacob's trouble*.

We will note that during the time of plenty, when Asenath is revealed to Joseph, his brothers are not in view, which pictures the setting aside of Israel during the period of time when Christ's bride is being sought and revealed. During this time, Joseph's two sons are born. Manasseh was the firstborn and through the association of his name with the *"father's house"* pictures for us the nation of Israel who is God's first adopted firstborn son, as we see recorded in **Exodus 4:22**,

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.""

Ephraim was the second born and through the association of his name with "fruitfulness" in the land of Joseph's affliction, he would picture for us the Church, and most particularly, those who would bring forth fruit for the kingdom.

Israel was created first as a son of God and adopted as a firstborn son, a status that remains current even though Israel's condition at present is in a state of disobedience or "sickness." Then the Church was born by a special creative act of God, also becoming sons of God, however their adoption as firstborn sons await the events that surround the Judgment Seat of Christ.

After the sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, are born, the seven years of plenty ended bringing in the seven years of famine. In the antitype, this represents all Christians being removed from the earth bringing in the Tribulation.

During the time when the famine is severe in all lands, Joseph's brothers have no choice, if they want to live, but to go to him to buy grain. In the same way, Christ's brothers, the nation of Israel, will have no choice during the Tribulation if they want to live but to cry out to the God of their fathers.

When Joseph's brothers first came to Egypt to buy grain Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize Joseph, for he was allured in fine Egyptian clothing. So Joseph hid his identity from them and tested them, to learn whether his brothers had changed their ways. He accused them of being spies and kept them in prison three days. The number "three" in Scripture is the number for "divine perfection and completion/resurrection." This timeframe is equivalent to the amount of days that Jesus suffered, died, was buried and resurrected. Likewise, it is the timeframe in which we must suffer and be tested in this world until Christ's return (awaiting our resurrection), which is the third day from Pentecost or the third one thousand-year period.

"...and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!"

So he put them all together in prison three days. Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God..."
(Genesis 42:16)

Following the *third* day, Joseph released them from prison and demanded that Benjamin, his full brother of younger age, be brought to him as a sign of their honesty. The same will transpire on the third one-thousand year period when Christ returns. He will release and gather the captive Jews from across the world and bring them back to their land.

So Joseph kept Simeon, one of the brothers, in prison until they brought Benjamin. The brothers realized that this test came from God as a punishment for their actions against Joseph and it was then that they had guilt for what they had done to him.

Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with

us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.

And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen?

Therefore, behold, his blood is now required of us." But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept." (Genesis 42:21)

In the antitype, the nation of Israel will cry out to the Lord and repent at the end of the Tribulation. God will hear their cry and Christ will return. He will gather the elect from the four corners of the earth and bring them back to their land. And all of Israel (as a whole) will see the Lord and be redeemed.

All the brothers, except Simeon, went back to their father, Jacob, and informed him of what happened. Jacob was hesitant in letting Benjamin go for he feared for his son's life, the only son remaining from his wife, Rachel. But the famine was great and they needed food, so the brothers set off with Benjamin to Egypt. And when they arrived, Joseph spoke and dined with them. As they were leaving with the grain, Joseph tested them once again. This time he commanded his steward to place his silver cup in Benjamin's bag. When the brothers were barely outside the city, Joseph commanded his steward to follow, cease and accuse them of stealing his silver cup. When the steward accused them, the brothers denied any wrongdoing and they all dropped their bags for inspection.

And they said, "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." (Genesis 44:9)

And when the steward pulled the cup from Benjamin's bag, the brothers in anguish tore their clothes and returned to Egypt. The tearing of the clothes was a sign of grief and mourning. They could not let Benjamin die, for their father would die of sorrow. So when they arrived in Egypt, they pleaded with Joseph for Benjamin's life and told him what their father Jacob had said,

"You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said,

Surely he is torn to pieces'; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave." (Genesis 44:27-29)

Through the outworking of circumstances and events, Joseph's brothers acknowledged and accepted responsibility for their previous treatment of Joseph. It is following this confession that Joseph revealed himself to them. In the antitype, we have recorded in **Zechariah 12:10** the prophecy of Israel acknowledging their sin and mourning for Christ.

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

Joseph wept loudly and told them not to fear, for it was God's will that he ended up in Egypt. God worked through the brothers' evil actions to preserve not only Jacob's family but the lives of many throughout the world.

And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 45:7, 8)

In the antitype, God sent His Son in the flesh knowing that He would be crucified, to deliver the lives of many throughout the earth. This was done for a purpose, with a view to Christ ascending the throne, being made Ruler of all the earth and Lord of all of God's house in the kingdom.

Note that through all of Joseph's dealings with his brothers during their famine and tribulation, his Gentile bride, Asenath (a type of the bride of Christ), is never involved or present. This clearly shows that the bride of Christ (the Church) will not be involved or be present with Christ's

dealings with His brethren, the nation of Israel. As Asenath did not suffer with Joseph's brethren, neither will the Church suffer with Israel or have any part in the Tribulation. The Church will be removed to heaven prior to the Tribulation on earth. Furthermore, the bride of Christ will not accompany Christ when He returns to earth for the second time to avenge his enemies and the evil one, but they will be in a place of safety in the heavenly kingdom.

After Joseph's father and his brothers settle in the land over which Joseph rules, Ephraim and Manasseh are blessed by his father Jacob. Recorded in **Genesis 48:3**, we see that Jacob adopts Joseph's sons as his own and in doing so, Ephraim and Manasseh each receive a full portion of the inheritance (**1 Chronicles 5:1**). With regards to the nation of Israel, Reuben was Israel's firstborn son and therefore in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn. However, as referenced in **1 Chronicles 5:1**, Reuben forfeited his firstborn right "*because he defiled his father's bed.*" Consequently, Reuben's birthright was divided amongst three of his brothers with rulership over the father's house being given to Judah, the priest in the father's house being given to Levi, and the double portion of the inheritance was given to Joseph. The tribe of Judah then would produce the kingly line (Christ—**Revelation 5:5**); out of the tribe of Levi would come the priestly line (**Ezekiel 44:15**) and the tribe of Joseph would receive the double portion of the inheritance through Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (**Ezekiel 48:4**).

With regards to the twelve tribes of Israel ruling on the earth in that coming Day, we see in **Revelation 7:4-8** that Manasseh, who received a double portion of the earthly inheritance, replaced Dan. Dan's descendants previously had abandoned their faith concerning their inheritance (**Genesis 49:17; Deuteronomy 33:22**). Consequently, the tribe would not be able to receive their offered inheritance because of their idolatry and disobedience against the Lord, for they sought to gain their own inheritance (**Judges 18**).

Within the typological framework given to us through the account of Joseph's life, a clear word-picture is presented concerning the concluding events of the Tribulation when Jacob's adoption of Joseph's sons is realized with Israel and the Church, who is God the Father's adopted firstborn sons. Within the picture of Ephraim and Manasseh, each receives a full portion of the Father's inheritance — Israel receiving the

earthly portion and the Church (bride of Christ) receiving the heavenly portion, fulfilling the type of the house of Joseph receiving the *double* portion.

During the Messianic Era, Christ as the Head, with Israel and the Church as firstborn sons of God, will rule over the Father's house as king-priests and will receive a double portion of the inheritance, either earthly or heavenly. Israel will be at the head of the nations, ruling on the earth. They will also be priests in the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem on the earth. This ministry as kings and priests will take place from within the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and will extend to the four corners of the earth as Israel's double portion. For the Church, the role of royal priesthood (king-priests) takes place from the heavens over the earth, thereby also demonstrating the double portion.

In **Genesis 48:13-20**, Jacob gives a greater blessing to Ephraim, even though Ephraim and Manasseh each receive an equal portion of the inheritance. According to Scripture, "*And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.*" Ephraim, the younger adopted son, is set before (set above in terms of status within the family) Manasseh the older adopted son. We see from our verses in **Genesis 48:14** that Jacob guided his hands knowingly to bless Ephraim above Manasseh and according to **Hebrews 11:22**, he did this "*by faith.*"

This indicates that God had revealed this to Jacob as His will, otherwise this blessing could not have been given "by faith." This presents a picture of the Church, the younger adopted son, being set before Israel, the older adopted son in terms of status within the family. *Simply put, the Church's heavenly calling is a higher calling than Israel's earthly calling.* Israel rejected the offer of the heavenly inheritance, the kingdom of the heavens, at Christ's first advent which the Church accepted. And because the Church received the offer, they were given a much higher position as joint-heir with Christ, a position not given to Israel in terms of inheritance.

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:16)

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”
(Revelation 3:21)

Following Jacob’s death, the brothers sent messengers to Joseph begging for forgiveness of their sin against him; for they feared now that their father was dead Joseph would take revenge. But Joseph wept and reassured them that he would continue to provide for them, saying:

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. **(Genesis 50:20)**

God transformed the evil of Joseph's brothers into an exceedingly great work. Joseph’s actions saved the lives of numerous people in the ancient world, and Joseph was faithful until the end, in which he also testified to the power and goodness of the living God. God works His good and perfect plan even through the evil plans of people.

We are to heed the example of Joseph, who by faith, endured hardship and tribulation, knowing that God was with him and had a bigger and better plan for him. Joseph typifies Jesus, who by faith, endured persecution knowing that God had a much bigger plan for Him. We also are to follow the examples that Christ and Joseph left. We are to be ambassadors for God. The word *ambassador* means “house-manager;” proclaiming His message to His household. Joseph did not hide God's word, but revealed it to everyone, even to Pharaoh, and he was not ashamed or afraid to do so.

When Pharaoh sent for him and asked him if it was true that he could interpret his dream, Joseph boldly answered Pharaoh, saying,

“It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”
(Genesis 41:16)

And like Joseph, we are called to be sons of the light that shines in a dark place (the world), proclaiming the message of Christ's return to all Christians.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts... (2 Peter 1:19)

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

God is the Word and the Light and we are sons of the Light. Through the Word and the Spirit in us, we must bear witness of that Light.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)

The prophetic Word *is* the Word of God which reveals all that the prophets have spoken concerning the age to come, primarily the second return of Christ and His millennial kingdom. It is the prophecy of the Word that God wants us to heed as a light, to proclaim to all in this world. This prophecy *is* the Word of the kingdom. It is not a separate doctrine, for it encompasses the entire Word of God.

However, because of the tares that Satan placed within the Church, the Word of the kingdom became corrupted and distorted. But the prophetic Word, the Word of the kingdom, the gospel of grace and the gospel of glory together *is* the *whole counsel of God*.

Example 10) Moses

Exodus 2:1

Seventy of Jacob's family was now in the land of Egypt. After Joseph and his brothers died, the children of Israel multiplied. After four hundred years, the number of Jews grew exceedingly great. The king of Egypt feared that the nation of Israel would take over the land, so he treated them harshly and made them slaves of hard labor. In order to stop the nation of Israel from growing any further, Pharaoh commanded every Hebrew son

born to be cast into the river Nile. It was then that Moses was born from the tribe of Levi.

His mother hid him for three months and then put him in a floating crib in the river. He was found by the Pharaoh's daughter who saw how beautiful he was and adopted him. And this was no coincidence. God had a purpose for Moses and therefore he was under His protection. God called on Moses to perform a great work. And Moses chose to do God's will, knowing the suffering that would follow, for he looked forward to the reward. The faith of Moses was great and he lived his life to please God.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. (Hebrews 11:23-26)

In **Acts 3:22, 23**, Moses is revealed as a type of Christ:

For Moses truly said to the fathers, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.

Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."

The following points of analogy between Moses and Christ are evident:

- 1) Both Moses and Jesus were born at a time when the kings had commanded that the male children of Israel be put to death.
- 2) Moses was first rejected by his own brethren at his first coming. Jesus was also rejected by His brethren at His first appearing.

3) When Moses' life was at risk, he arose on the third day and fled to a far country. When Jesus' life was at risk, he arose from the dead on the third day and went into a far country, a heavenly country.

4) While Moses settled in a far country, he married a Gentile bride, Zipporah. While Christ is in heaven, He is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name (**Acts 15:14**). On the 7th Day, Christ will settle in the heavenly country and be married to His bride (the Church).

5) The trials of the children of Israel became so severe in the wilderness during Moses' absence that they cried out to the Lord. The suffering of the children of Israel will become so severe during the Tribulation during Christ's absence that they will come to call upon the Lord.

6) God heard the cry of Israel, His firstborn son, and prepared to send Moses back to deliver them from bondage and persecution under the Assyrian Pharaoh. Likewise, God will hear the cry of the nation of Israel during the future Great Tribulation and prepare to send Christ back to deliver them from bondage and persecution under the Assyrian Antichrist. (**Isaiah 7:17; Micah 5:5, 6**)

7) Moses' Gentile wife, Zipporah, (a type of the Church) did not have any part in the sufferings of the children of Israel during the Exodus, as she was sent to be with her father, Jethro (**Exodus 18:1, 2**—after this passage she is not mentioned again). Neither will the Church have any part in the seven year Tribulation while God deals with Israel nor will the Church return with Christ at the end of the Tribulation to war against the Gentile nations.

The accounts in the Books of Moses apply directly to Israel; however the Church has been given these accounts as an example when covering *the journey* of the Israelites from Egypt to the Land of Canaan (**1 Corinthians 10:11**). This dual message delivered to Israel and the Church has to do with one thing—redemption. It has to do with deliverance “out of the affliction and bondage of Egypt” (a type of the world) and deliverance unto “a land flowing with milk and honey” (a type of the kingdom).

Israel, under Moses, was delivered from Egypt *after* God had completed His ten judgments upon Egypt. After Moses returned from Median, after the *ten* plagues, after Israel's appropriation of the blood of the paschal

lambs, and right before the complete destruction of power in Egypt, then Israel was restored.

In the antitype, Israel in the near future, will once again be delivered from their dispersion amongst the Gentile nations (out of the affliction and bondage of the world) and be delivered unto their land, the earthly kingdom. After the Tribulation, after Christ returns from heaven, after Israel has appropriated the blood of the paschal lamb (belief in the Lord) and has been judged, and immediately before the complete destruction of Gentile world power, then Israel will be restored.

During the Tribulation on earth, the Church is not in view. They will have been raptured to the heavens previous to God's dealings with Israel and the Gentile nations. And when Christ returns the second time to deliver the children of Israel out from the Gentile nations, the Church will not accompany Him. We see this when Moses returned to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt, his Gentile bride Zipporah did not accompany him, as she was sent to her father. After Moses delivered Israel, he was reunited with his new, faithful bride, and so will our Lord be reunited with His newly chosen bride *after* He has dealt with Israel.

After Israel placed the blood of the paschal lambs over the doorposts showing their belief in the Lord, their "three days' journey" out of Egypt to the land of Canaan began.

The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. (Exodus 3:18)

This account symbolizes the beginning of a Christian's three days' journey immediately after he places his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. And just as we saw with Israel, this "three days' journey" that we need to make requires a lifestyle of self-sacrifice implemented day by day, looking for the rest out ahead of us. The three days' journey requires a two day period of choosing to crucify our flesh, which would enable us to function in that symbolized by the third day, the resurrection power of the spirit. In the third day, at the end of our journey, a rest is in view. Those who have been faithfully obedient to this calling will find themselves resurrected to a position of power with Christ in His heavenly kingdom.

The events with Israel during their passage through the Red Sea and the wilderness are examples for Christians, as **1 Corinthians 10:11** makes clear:

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The crossing of the Red Sea typifies the place where the dead are to be buried and is the place occupied by the Gentile nations (“Sea” in Scripture usually means “Gentiles”). This experience is a picture of *baptism* — first as a burial, following a removal from the waters representing a resurrection.

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

A Christian’s baptism therefore symbolizes his commitment in putting to death his flesh, i.e., “the old man” and walking according to the Spirit, i.e., “the new man in Christ.” This journey lasts throughout the duration of a Christian’s lifetime. We will realize that our first birth, that which is born of the flesh (our sin nature) is connected to this world and therefore to the god of this world, Satan, putting it in opposition to the things of God. Therefore, nothing connected with our first birth will have any inheritance in the kingdom of the heavens.

Israel’s journey through the wilderness under Moses involved trials and testing. God allowed Israel to be tested for forty years to determine their faithfulness. Christians are being tested with trials and tribulation to determine their faithfulness as well. Our faithfulness or unfaithfulness is determined on whether we are being mindful of the things of God or if we are being mindful of the things of men (the flesh) and the world. We can see this matter with regards to Israel. God provided Israel all that was necessary for food on their journey to the Promised Land — the Manna from heaven. But Israel grew tired of it, longing instead for the cucumbers and the melons they ate in Egypt. They were being mindful of the things of men and of the world and not of God.

We remember the fish we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!...

Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. (Numbers 11:6-10)

Rejecting the Bread of Life that came down from heaven, preferring to eat what they were given in Egypt and forgetting that they were in bondage there, Israel was actually rejecting God.

Their continued disobedience finally led to their overthrow in the wilderness following their actions at Kadesh-Barnea. Likewise, Christians have been given the opportunity to choose whether they will be mindful of the things of God and not of men or of the world; whether they will desire what God has given them — the Bread of Life — to sustain them in their journey to the kingdom.

Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man [referring to His Word] and drink His blood [referring to His Spirit], you have no life in you...

This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:53)

Another example of Israel’s disobedience in the wilderness is during the time when Moses went up to Mount Sinai to receive the laws of God. The Israelites looked away, fulfilling the desires of their flesh, because they perceived that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain. Their unfaithfulness resulted in the Israelites worship of the gold calf revealing their apostasy towards God.

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” (Exodus 32:1)

The expression, “*This Moses,*” is spoken of in demeaning tones, reflecting Israel’s turn against him. They did not wait on God, that is, they did not continue their hope in Him. Tragically, they abandoned the living God for a false god at the very time that God was reaching out to them. It is the very exact thing that Christians do when they focus on the things of this world as oppose to the things of God. When they seek their fleshly desires first, they are making that their god, committing idolatry against the Lord. Christ had prophesied this in the parable of the faithful and evil servant in **Matthew 24:48, 49** when He said,

But if that evil servant says in his heart, “My master is delaying his coming,” and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards...

Again we see this in **2 Peter 3:3**:

...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?”

Because of their continued disobedience, Israel faced their impending judgment in the desert. And just as it happened to Israel, so it will be with unfaithful Christians when they stand in judgment before the Lord.

Moses chose to suffer the indignities associated with God’s people, instead of embracing the worldly pleasures of Pharaoh’s kingdom. Christ Himself chose to suffer for the world in order that God’s will be done. Christians are to model Christ, which means choosing to suffer for doing God’s will. And like Moses and Christ, who obtained a good testimony through faith, we also are to move forward with faithful endurance having the hope of reward.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Hebrews 11:39, 40)

Example 11) Joshua
Numbers 27:12

Before Moses' death, God asked him to go up to Mount Abarim to see the Promised Land which He had given to the children of Israel, but not to enter. Moses had one request. He asked God to appoint a successor to guide the children of Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey.

Then Moses spoke to the Lord saying: "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." (Numbers 27:15-17)

There were two candidates who were considered to succeed Moses and lead the nation of Israel: Joshua and Caleb. God chose Joshua, because he was full of the Holy Spirit.

And the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim.

At his word they shall go out, at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him--all the congregation." So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. (Numbers 27:18-23)

Are not all believers in God filled with the Holy Spirit? The moment one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, his spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in him. However, the believer now has a choice whether he will allow the Holy Spirit to guide him into all Truth, or whether he will do nothing with the gift of the Holy Spirit, continuing to live a carnal life. God knew Joshua's heart and chose him to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. Joshua had allowed the Holy

Spirit to work through him providing him the wisdom and guidance he needed to lead the people of Israel. The name "Joshua" (Hebrew *Jehoshua*) is an Anglicized form of the Hebrew name for "Jesus" (Greek *Iesous*). Joshua produced the fruit of the Spirit. Moreover, Joshua was an Israelite, from the tribe of Ephraim through Joseph, and had great faith. Caleb also possessed great faith in God, but was not an Israelite. He was a descendent from Esau through Kenaz (**Genesis 15:19**), a Kenizzite. But Caleb's wholehearted devotion to God was never in question, even in the wilderness, he wholly followed the Lord (**Joshua 14:8**); therefore, he inherited the land that he requested.

Joshua had been Moses assistant for many years and was taught by Moses. With this preparation, he led Israel in much of the same way as Moses did. Both were leaders of the nation of Israel and both were Israelites. In comparing their leadership, both were reared in Egypt and became leaders at around the age of eighty years old. Both led the people of Israel, one through the Red Sea and the other through the Jordan River. Both delivered a farewell address to the people of Israel and were called "the servant of the Lord." God's presence appeared both to Moses at the burning bush in **Exodus 3:5**, then again in **Exodus 33:12** and to Joshua before the destruction of Jericho in **Joshua 5:13**. Both were commanded to take off their sandals before His presence. With Joshua, the Man identified Himself as "the Commander of the Army of the Lord." This could be no other than Jesus Himself, for God's face became visible to human eyes only in the Man Jesus as **John 1:18** indicates,

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." (Exodus 33:20)

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

As believers behold the glory of God in the Word of God, the Spirit transforms them into the likeness of Jesus Christ, and in the age to come, they will see God.

In **Matthew 5:8**, Jesus proclaims,

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The believer's hope today should be to see the Lord face to face. Although neither Moses nor any other human being was previously able to do so, there will come a time when all believers will be able to see God face to face!

They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:3-5)

Both in the account of the Israelites under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, and again thirty-eight years later under Joshua after the Israelites had crossed the Jordan River, the principle of faith and works is presented. The Israelites, in both instances, were to go into the land and drive out every inhabitant (**Deuteronomy 7:11ff**). They were to go into the land and possess it, believing that God would deliver the inhabitants (Nephilim) over to them (**Deuteronomy 7:23, 24**).

Though the Israelites would be slaying the enemy, acting by faith in God, the Lord would actually be slaying the enemy. The Lord would act ahead of them and deliver the enemies into their hands. However, under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, failure to exercise faith in the Lord is seen. Twelve spies had been sent into the land to spy it out and bring back a report concerning the land and the inhabitants of the land, a land flowing with milk and honey that God would give them, even though the land was inhabited by the Nephilim, a people of gigantic stature.

Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, rendered a positive report concerning entering the land (**Numbers 13:30**). But the other ten spies followed with a negative and false report concerning entering the land (**Numbers 13:31**). The Israelites believed the false report of the ten spies and began to complain against Moses. They sought to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt (**Numbers 14:1-4**). Because of this, the Israelites *fell away* at Kadesh-Barnea. Israel committed a sin with which there was no repentance. And because this sin dealt with the land that God had covenanted to them, God was not going to change His mind.

The very next day, the nation of Israel under Moses repented (changed their minds) and sought to enter the land and defeat the enemy. But God did not repent, for He had to stay true to His word. At this point in the account, God was no longer among them with respect to taking the land. God would no longer act before them and deliver the enemy into their hands. As a result, the Israelites attempting to defeat the enemy the next day were themselves defeated and driven back. Their actions were their own, not the Lord's (**Numbers 14:40-45**). Their actions were not done in faith, according to that which the Lord had commanded.

For the next thirty-eight years, the entire generation of Israelites twenty years old and above, except Caleb and Joshua, died in the wilderness. Then, under Joshua, the Israelites were again to return and take possession of the land. This time the Israelites acted by faith in God, trusting that the Lord would deliver the enemy into their hands. After crossing the Jordan River, the first battle involved the destruction of Jericho. And the Israelites, believing God, experienced victory (**Joshua 6:1ff**). The Lord gave the victory. The battle is the Lord's.

Two million Jews were led out of Egypt, but *only two* were found worthy to enter the land of Canaan. Joshua and Caleb obeyed all that God had commanded them to do. They completed the journey and were able to cross over and inherit the land. The Word confirms that Christians will also inherit the kingdom of heaven *if* they obey all that God has commanded.

Example 12) Rahab
Joshua 2:1

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Hebrews 11:31)

Rahab lived in Jericho, in the land of Canaan, a land that was devoted to the worship of the god, Baal. Within this cult, base sex worship was prevalent and religious prostitution even commanded as an act of supposed union with Baal, Asherath and other pagan deities (descendants of the Nephilims) under whose leader is Satan. Hence, could be why Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute. Human sacrifice was common in this

satanic occult and it was a frequent practice in an effort to placate their gods — to burn children alive. This is why Joshua cursed any attempts at re-building Jericho after its destruction:

Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, “Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his first-born, and with his younger he shall set up its gates.” (Joshua 6:26)

Joshua’s curse found a dramatic fulfillment many centuries later when Hiel of Bethel laid its foundation and rebuilt Jericho’s gates at the cost of his children’s death, seen in **1 Kings 16:34**,

In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the Lord, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

Rahab lived in the midst of this evil and immoral community. When the spies of Israel came to scout the city of Canaan, Rahab hid them from the king of Jericho to protect them. She and her family had heard of the God of Israel and how He had led the Israelites out of Egypt to give them the land of Canaan (**Joshua 2:8-10**). Her great faith and fear in God was pleasing to Him therefore He saved her and her family from death. Her actions made her part of God's people, ultimately placing her in the line of ancestry to David. As a result of her act of faith in the Lord, she later was honored by God with becoming a mother in the line of Jesus (**Matthew 1:5**).

By hiding the spies, Rahab assisted Israel with the conquest of Canaan, a task that God had blessed so that Israel could inherit the land. Rahab and her family believed in God and His plan for Israel, therefore she was given salvation. Before God destroyed the city of Jericho, Rahab and her family were taken out safely and given the land as an inheritance.

Rahab spoke to the spies, saying,

“And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for

the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." (Joshua 2:11-13)

Rahab was to bring her family to her house and place a scarlet cord to hang out the window. Before God delivered the land of Jericho into the hands of Joshua (Israel) and destroyed the city, the spies went in, saw the scarlet cord outside of Rahab's window and delivered her and her family out of the city.

And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. (Joshua 6:23-25)

Rahab, a Gentile, is a *type* of saved Gentile during the Great Tribulation, acting in the realm of faith. And like Rahab, those who act by faith in God will be rewarded as heirs to the kingdom of heaven. The story of Rahab provides us with a picture of the events that will take place with respect to a considerable number of saved Gentiles during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, years that lead into the total destruction of Gentile world power. Rahab represents those saved Gentiles who act by faith during this period of unparalleled persecution.

Rahab's confession of faith in the living God and her good works of receiving the spies with peace brought about her transformation from a Gentile prostitute living in sin to a believer living by faith. And because of her faith in God and her blessings to Israel, Rahab received salvation and the inheritance.

It is also of importance to note the timing God set for the destruction of Jericho and how it relates to the timing of the coming Tribulation.

And the Lord said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once.

This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." (Joshua 6:2-5)

Joshua did as the Lord commanded, waiting until the seventh day to blow the trumpets and attack the city:

But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And on the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" (Joshua 6:15, 16)

The events that took place with the destruction of Jericho portray a word-picture of that which will occur at the end of this age. For six days (six thousand years), God has been preparing for Christ's kingdom, to conquer the Gentile nations and the devil, and to make Christ Jesus King over the earth. On the seventh day (seventh one thousandth year), an angel will blow the seventh trumpet marking the end of the seven years of Tribulation and the beginning of Christ's kingdom, with triads of angels proclaiming, *the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!* (**Revelation 11:15c, d**)

The future rebuilt Babylon along with all Gentile world kingdoms of this age will be brought down, referred to as *Babylon's fall* (**Revelation 18:1-24**); and this will be the case for Jerusalem as well because of their association with “Babylon.”

Ancient Babylon was the proverbial seat of apostasy and idolatry. It was the principal city of ancient paganism. And it was there that the people, under Nimrod (meaning “rebel” ruler, a “mighty one on the earth,” i.e. Nephilim), began to build the Tower of Babel for the purpose of forming a new world order. But Babylon became a site of confusion because there the Lord confused the language and scattered the people, as they wanted to glorify themselves and do their own will. Therefore, Babel or Babylon serves as a name and symbol in the Bible for activities directed against God by the nations of the earth. At the end of this age, God will once again find the nations under these conditions. You do not have to look hard to see that we are living in a type of Babylon today.

And like Rahab, those individuals coming out of the Gentile nations who place their faith in the Lord during the Tribulation and endure “until the end” will be found worthy to receive the inheritance in the age to come. We see this pictured in **Matthew 25:31-46** in the judgment of the Gentile nations. A judgment of these saved individuals who come out of the Tribulation alive, as with those slain in **Revelation 20:4-6**, occurs when Christ returns. And, during this judgment of saved Gentiles, the faithful will be allowed to enter the kingdom, but the unfaithful will be turned away.

Rahab's actions demonstrated great courage and faith in God while in the midst of a Babylon-like city (Jericho) whose people were against God. Today, the nations of the world are representative of Babylon, with its selfish ambitions, pride and arrogance, the love of money and material consumption — all of which have become the people's god. World leaders today are no different than the men of ancient Babylon, carousing during the day, worshiping false gods at night, and conspiring together to form a new world order without the leadership of God. These leaders are under the rule of Satan and his seed, men who came from the lineage of the “Giants” or “Nephilims,” (born from the fallen angels who had relations with the daughters of men). They have the money and power to control governments and people around the world. They have drawn the majority of the population through the deceitfulness of television, radio,

and the internet, having been blinded by Satan through the lusts of the world. Christ prophesied saying,

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find the faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

Jesus' question in **Luke 18:8** denotes a negative answer, for He knows that He will *not* find the faith on the earth when He returns. The prophecies written in the Word have told us that in the end times the love of many will grow cold for Christ and very few will be looking for Him. Do we see this today? Most assuredly, yes. Though Christians will be removed from the earth to heaven before the Tribulation begins, in order to obtain Millennial life in God's heavenly land, Christians must follow Rahab's example by being faithfully obedient to the Lord in hope and fear, awaiting Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom.

Example 13) Ruth

After Joshua's death, the nation of Israel fell into disobedience; they did not follow God's command to complete the conquest of the land. The altars of the Canaanites (Nephilim) remained and the Israelites dwelt among them, something that the Lord told them not to do. Because of this, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals (**Judges 2:11-15**). Therefore, God sold them into the hands of their enemies. Despite Israel's apostasy, God provided deliverers, the judges, when Israel cried out for help. The Book of **Ruth** takes place during the times of the judges --- a period filled with extreme spiritual and moral decay in Israel.

The story of Ruth is one of the most inspiring stories in the Word. Ruth was a Gentile who married into a Jewish family. Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, was an Israelite from Bethlehem and had moved to Moab when the famine struck. But after Naomi's husband and two sons died (signifying Israel's death, set aside as a nation), she told her two daughter-in-laws, Ruth and Orpah, that she would return to her land in Bethlehem for she had heard that there was bread there.

It was during this time that Ruth and Orpah were given the choice to go from the land of their birth to the land of their calling. For Christians, it is understanding the goal of their spirit salvation — to journey to that

heavenly calling of the kingdom. Therefore, they both chose to journey to Bethlehem with her. But in the course of their journey, Naomi insisted that they go back to Moab, each at their mother's house as she could no longer provide husbands for them. In the antitype, Christians also have been told in the Word of God that the journey to the salvation of their soul is not an easy road, but one filled with trials and suffering. Orpah chose to return to Moab, but Ruth was determined to go with Naomi and follow her beliefs and her people to Bethlehem.

Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you;

For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;

Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried.

The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." (Ruth 1:16)

The Book of **Ruth** provides a complete word-picture of the Church and the journey to the Millennial kingdom. It begins with our new birth, the salvation of the spirit, pictured when Ruth and her sister-in-law Orpah became members of a Jewish family by marriage. The moment of our new birth, we, Christians, become part of a Jewish family as a result of Christ's death and shed blood, as we see in **Galatians 3:29**,

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The death of Elimelech and his two sons picture the end of the Theocracy and Israel's setting aside due to their disobedience and unbelief pertaining to Christ and the offer and re-offer of the Kingdom.

The mother-in-law, Naomi, who is a type of the nation of Israel, also represents that which came through the nation — the Scriptures. Following Ruth and Orpah's marriage to her sons (their new birth), Naomi informs them of the land of their calling. Likewise, after an individual has believed in the Lord and his spirit has been made alive, he must have a

proper understanding of the goal of his spirit salvation, knowing as to why he is to reach the heavenly land. Following their new birth, Ruth and Orpah chose to believe in the Word of the kingdom and journey with Naomi. Ruth faithfully wanted to continue the journey with Naomi to the end. But Orpah fell back when she decided to return to her land in Moab, a type of the world.

This typifies two types of Christians --- faithful and unfaithful (carnal). One will overcome and the other will be overcome. One will finish the race, the other will not. One will possess salvation of the soul and the other will lose their soul in the age to come. The story of Ruth is very similar to that of Abraham, in that both had forsaken their family and homeland in response to following God's calling. Both were called out of their country to go to a land that God would show them.

The story continues now solely with Ruth, a new believer in *the faith*, to teach us the path of overcoming and reaching our goal. It is so important that Christians, after they have received Christ, be told why they have been saved, for what purpose, and be given instructions on their spiritual journey so that they may overcome and finish the race to the kingdom. Ruth understood what it meant to travel to a foreign land, for Naomi had told her that God was there giving bread to all. Likewise, Christians must know the reason for the journey -- to receive the Bread of Life and glory.

How can a new believer successfully make the journey to a foreign land, a heavenly land, if he does not know why he has been saved? In addition, how can he overcome the world, the flesh and the devil if he has no belt of truth – no armor of God? Satan attacks Christians from the moment they are saved because they are a threat to his rulership position, and more so to those Christians who are mature, those who have the knowledge of the kingdom and seek to gain the inheritance. This is evident in Scripture when Satan attacked Jesus right after He was baptized by John the Baptist:

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. "Then Jesus was led up

by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
(Matthew 3:16-4:1)

Even Jesus, when He was tempted by the devil, did not revile back but used the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) to resist him, acting in obedience to God's commands. Likewise, Christians are to be strong in the Lord, by and through the study of His Word and act in accordance to His commands. This is how Christians can successfully make the journey to the heavenly kingdom.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest, Ruth notices Boaz and seeks to work in his field. As Ruth gleans in the field, Boaz notices her. To *glean* means to "gather up" and the *field* references "a land." Therefore, Ruth was being fruitful for Boaz (a type of Christ) in his land. When Boaz noticed this, he gave her these instructions:

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them." **(Ruth 2:8, 9)**

- 1) He told her not to glean in another field,
- 2) He told her not to leave from there,
- 3) He told her to stay close by his young women
- 4) He told her to keep her eyes on the field which they reap
- 5) He told her to follow them.

Ruth did as Boaz commanded. She worked in Boaz's field from morning to evening, showing a complete period of time. For Christians, this would represent the time covered from the moment of their new birth to the time of their physical death or rapture. Christians, immediately after their new birth, are to work in the part of the field that belongs to Christ. In order to qualify as Christ's bride, Christians also are to be fruitful through the Spirit in preparation for Christ's kingdom and to stay close with His group, who are believers of "the faith," looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If we associate ourselves with others outside of the family of faithful believers, then we will be tempted to fall away from the Word and from

the goal of our calling. We are to work or produce fruit for the kingdom, allowing the Spirit to work through us. The “works” that we are to do relates to being faithfully obedient to the Word of God and is the same as “walking in the Spirit” or “walking in the light” and not the flesh. Works of the flesh are never pleasing to the Lord, as these works do not glorify God but only glorify man; they are not done according to His will.

Ruth was to keep her eyes focused on Boaz’s land. Likewise, the Word of God says Christians are to keep their eyes focused on His land, the heavenly land, and to go after this, working to receive the full reward of the heavenly kingdom.

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. (2 John 8)

Ruth fell to the floor and asked Boaz why he had accepted her, since she was a foreigner. Ruth was not an Israelite, but a Moabite. But Boaz reassured her that she was no longer a foreigner, but belonging to the same family as Israel and Israel's God. Likewise, Christ's death and shed blood made possible the creation of the "new man in Christ." And since Christ is Abraham's seed, Christians also become Abraham's seed and therefore all part of the same family of God, having access to the inheritance.

Boaz explained that he favored her because of her blessings and loyalty to Naomi, a type of Israel and the Scriptures, and because by faith in God she had left her home and family to go with Naomi to a strange land.

And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." (Ruth 2:11, 12)

Likewise, Christians who leave all to follow Christ will receive a full reward as we see in **Matthew 19:29**,

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal [age-lasting] life.

Within the Old Testament, God provides examples that may have secondary applications to its teachings. For instance, in **Ruth 2:11, 12**, Ruth left all to follow Naomi, a type of Israel. Ruth was obedient to God's covenant to Abraham when He said, *"I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you"* (**Genesis 2:3**). Ruth blessed Naomi, a type of Israel, and dwelt with her even after they entered Bethlehem. Why bless Israel? Because Israel was given the promises, the Word of God, and from them came the Messiah, and they in turn will be Jehovah's witnesses to the ends of the earth. The Gentiles have been 'grafted in' among the Jews; and if any Gentile bears any fruit at all to the glory of God, it is because it came first from the Jewish roots and out through the Gentile branch (**Romans 11:16-25**).

In your seed (Israel) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. (Genesis 22:18)

Only by the blessings of Israel will all the other nations be blessed. God has called both Jesus and Israel His firstborn, One begotten and one adopted. And through Christ, the Church is also His firstborn through adoption (a positional standing which will be realized yet future).

Jesus as Firstborn:

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

Israel as firstborn:

Thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn." (Exodus 4:22)

Church as firstborn:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of

angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Therefore, all three: Jesus, Israel and the Church are God's firstborn Sons. The Christian, through Christ, acquires a family relationship with Israel. God recognizes the Christian as a wild olive tree that was grafted in to the good olive tree (Israel). Naomi, in this case, gave Ruth instructions just as the Jewish prophets gave instructions to the Gentiles by and through the Word of God. Israel is the nation God called to be witnesses to the Gentiles. And Ruth obeyed all that she said. Naomi instructed her on sanctification, to prepare herself for Boaz, a type of Christ. Another example to show that Naomi was a type of Israel is when she mentioned to Ruth that Boaz was a close relative of hers. Scripture calls God the Redeemer ("close relative") of Israel in **Isaiah 60:16** and Jesus the Redeemer of all believers in **1 Peter 1:18, 19**. Therefore, Boaz (a type of Christ) was a close relative of Naomi (a type of Israel and the Scriptures). Ruth clung to Naomi; and Christians must also cling to the Scriptures in order to be properly prepared for Christ.

The first application of Naomi as a *type of Israel* is presented with Ruth (Christians) blessing Israel and hearing the prophets. The second application of Naomi as a *type of the Scriptures* is presented with Ruth (Christians) allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and hearing the Scriptures.

Ruth, at this point in the type, has worked in Boaz's field throughout the time of the harvest. She was allowed to bring forth fruit in relation to the kingdom, allowed to glean a provided harvest in the field. Yet, she waited upon the Lord of the harvest to supply the grain (individuals), and at the same time, she kept her eyes on the field while walking in the Spirit (dying to flesh) and patiently enduring trials. After Ruth had gleaned in the field throughout the day, she "beat out what she had gleaned," leaving about an "ephah of barley" (**Ruth 2:17**). After gathering the grain left for her, she worked with that which she had gleaned, removing the grain from the stalk until the valuable part alone remained.

And so it is with Christians today. They are not to confine themselves to just one part of their servitude to Christ in the field (the land, the world).

In other words, they are not to cease their work following the message of salvation by grace through faith. Rather, once a person has been saved, they are then to proclaim the message surrounding the gospel of the glories of Christ. They are to continue this work until individuals have been brought from immaturity to maturity, until they have been brought to maturity in the Word of the kingdom.

So Ruth chapter two, dealing with the harvest, covers one part of the picture of the Christian working in the field. The beginning of chapter three deals with preparation for meeting the Lord on His threshing floor at the end of the harvest, and covers another *inseparably related* part of the picture --- together having to do with an inheritance in another land.

Naomi proceeded to instruct Ruth on how to prepare herself for meeting Boaz at the threshing floor at the end of the harvest, to show that she wanted to be his bride. This typifies Christians preparing themselves in this life for the end of the age, when they will stand before Christ at His judgment seat showing their works for the qualification as His bride.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor...." (Ruth 3:1-3)

Ruth chose to be faithfully obedient to Naomi's instructions:

And she said to her, " All that you say to me I will do." (Ruth 3:5)

Ruth truly was an overcomer. She represents faithful Christians who have made the choice to abide in God's word and who say, "*All that you say to me I will do.*"

Christians are to be preparing as Ruth did. It is evident that the Book of Ruth typifies the Church from the beginning to the end. The "rest" that Naomi refers to signifies the "Sabbath Rest" or the "7th Day," the "Millennial Kingdom," as seen in **Hebrews 4:1**:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to come short of it.

Preparation for meeting Christ at His judgment seat is presented in **Ruth 3:3** when Naomi instructs Ruth to do three things: *wash thyself...anoint thyself...put on thy best garment.*

WASH THYSELF:

Washings were part of the Mosaic Law performed by the Levitical priests, priests from the tribe of Levi. A one-time initial washing of the complete body was done. Because they possessed a sin nature and ministered under these conditions, the need for continual partial washings of the hands and feet were necessary. And the same process was done again when Jesus washed the disciple's feet at the Last Supper, in order to cleanse them and prepare them for the kingdom. And Christ, who died for our sins and thoroughly cleansed us from all unrighteousness, is in heaven acting as Mediator for us, as our High Priest according to the order of Aaron. Christ's present ministry is for the "one new man in Christ;" for the saved and not the unsaved. Christians received a complete washing at the time they were saved, based on Christ's past work at Calvary. Then, Christians must be washed daily, through Christ, from all unrighteousness. In other words, they must confess their sins to the Lord so that He will forgive them of their sins and cleanse them. This is part of their preparation. And, apart from these continual partial washings, Christians can have no part with Christ in His future kingdom (**John 13:8, 10; cf Isaiah 1:16-20**).

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:7-9)

We find in the Book of **1 John** the teachings of washing or cleansing oneself through confession of sin in order to have a relationship with Christ and ultimately to have a part with Him in the kingdom. And if we say we do not sin, then we are not speaking the truth, as the Word so testifies:

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:10)

The Word says that everyone sins, as all are born with a sin nature:

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins....
(Ephesians 2:1)*

Not until we have overcome and have received our glorified bodies in the Millennial kingdom will we be completely without sin. Therefore, we confess our sins to the Lord and practice putting it away, allowing the indwelling Holy Spirit to transform us.

ANOINT THYSELF:

The Old Testament prophets used oil to anoint themselves in order for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. "Oil" in Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit (**1 John 2:20**). In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in **Matthew 25:1-13**, all ten virgins had the same amount of oil in their lamps, but only five of them had an extra supply of oil in their vessels along with their lamps, qualifying them to be ready for the Lord, the Bridegroom, and enter the kingdom. The other five virgins did not make it into the kingdom because they were not prepared. Another important issue to address is that all ten were "virgins," meaning all ten were *saved*. The moment we were saved, we received the oil, the Holy Spirit, indwelling in us. However, not all Christians are filled with that extra oil or Spirit. Only if we allow the Spirit to work through us, to bring us to a mature understanding of the Word, to teach us all things and lead us into all truth, will we have that extra filling of the Holy Spirit.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26)

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears (from the Lord) He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me (Christ Jesus), for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All the things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-15)

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21)

We therefore have the Spirit in us, but we are not automatically *filled* with the Spirit. We have the choice to fill it or not. Just as all Christians have a heavenly calling, we also have the choice whether we want to be a part of that calling and make the journey. Spiritual growth unto maturity is equally related to being filled with the Spirit. This is a requirement for Christians if they are to be prepared for meeting Christ at His judgment seat and to qualify as His bride.

PUT ON THY BEST GARMENT:

Naomi was instructing Ruth to be prepared to meet her bridegroom; therefore a future wedding was in view. And in order for her to be accepted, she had to put on her wedding garment. Likewise, Christians must have on their wedding garment before they can be accepted by the Bridegroom, Christ. This wedding garment is known as "*the righteous acts of the saints*," noted in **Revelation 19:7, 8**. Being righteous means "right living," being like Christ, the Light, holy and acceptable to God.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. (1 John 3:7)

One can obtain righteousness through practice. Only by knowing Christ can we be like Him.

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12)

As the believer lives by faith, God continues to save him from the power of sin to live righteously. This is accomplished by first confessing our sin (**washing ourselves**), spiritual growth unto maturity; allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us all things by and through the study of the Word of God (**anointing ourselves**) and finally, working daily to live righteously through faith in Jesus Christ and looking forward to His return and to be His bride. This also involves faith through trials, tribulations and through

spiritual warfare. And this daily work is the righteous acts (**putting on the wedding garment**) which will be required at His Judgment seat.

Appearing before Christ at His judgment seat without a wedding garment will result in not entering the wedding festivities and not becoming His bride. This is presented in the Parable of the Wedding Feast in **Matthew 22:1-14**:

So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'For many are called, but few are chosen.'

In the parable of the wedding feast, the king is Jesus Christ who calls the man, "friend." Therefore, this man was eternally saved, for Christ would not call an unsaved individual His friend. Besides that, the man was in heaven. The unsaved will not be raptured to heaven at Christ's return. Because this believer was unprepared, the king declared him unworthy. This resulted in the believer being sent out of the banquet hall and into outer darkness (darkness outside of the kingdom). And the man began to weep and gnash his teeth in deep despair. For many are called to Christ's wedding, but only those who heed His call and come prepared will be chosen as His bride.

Clear instructions concerning the necessary preparation have been given in the Word of God. For those Christians who ignore these instructions, there are clear warnings for them in the Word which will occur at the end of this age. Christians who do not believe that these warnings apply to them have placed a veil over their eyes, have put wax in their ears and as Paul called the Galatians, are "foolish," meaning "*stupid*" in the Greek. The Day will come when they will find themselves naked and cast out.

After Ruth prepares herself to meet Boaz by washing, anointing, and putting on her wedding garment, she is to wait until he is done eating and drinking and he has laid down to rest, then she is to lay down next to him and wait for him to tell her what to do next. In like manner, Christians, after they have prepared themselves by washing (confessing of sin), anointing (seeking the Word to maturity and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach), and putting on the wedding garment (righteous works done

according to the Spirit), they are to eagerly hope and wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, until He has finished building His kingdom and He is ready to enter into His rest. When that Day of rest has come, they will be told what to do next, at the Judgment seat of Christ.

Boaz awoke at midnight to see Ruth lying next to him. The word "midnight" in Scripture usually denotes judgment. So this is when the beginning of judgment for Ruth would take place, presenting a word-picture of Christians standing before Christ at His judgment seat. In **Ruth** chapter **three**, Ruth appears before Boaz on his threshing floor, at the end of the harvest, *in a prepared and ready manner*. And Ruth can be seen appearing *after* Boaz has completed his work. Because of Ruth's prior actions, she was now in a position to make her request. Boaz is pleased with Ruth and tells her that she is blessed by all that she has done for him. He in turn will reward her and give her all that she has requested. But first, he had to offer her and the land of her father to a closer relative, due to the custom in those days. If the closer relative refused to redeem her, then he would gladly do it. (**Ruth 3:12, 13**)

Like Ruth, Christians who eagerly wait and are prepared for Christ's return will also be blessed and rewarded. At His judgment seat, Christ will be the One worthy to redeem both man and the land. He will take the scroll (title deed of the earth) from God the Father, who is the closer relative. An exact occurrence of this is pictured in **Revelation** chapter **five**.

Boaz proceeded to redeem Ruth by speaking to the closer relative. He offered the relative to buy back the land, but he also must redeem Ruth, a Moabite (Gentile). The relative said he could not, otherwise he would ruin his own inheritance. So Boaz was the next in line worthy to redeem Ruth and the land. (**Ruth 4:1-8**)

Likewise, Jesus Christ takes the scroll from God the Father. God the Father, the closer relative, gave Christ the authority to redeem both man and the earth for two reasons:

- 1) God could not redeem the Church as His wife because Israel is already God's wife. (**Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20**)
- 2) Christ was found worthy by the shedding of His blood to redeem the earth and the Church, His wife.

And just as Boaz and the closer relative had witnesses present, so also Christ and God will have witnesses present before the throne to acknowledge the redemption of the inheritance:

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song... (Revelation 5:8, 9)

The witnesses for Boaz:

And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel: and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. (Ruth 4:11)

Therefore Boaz redeems Ruth and takes her for his wife, just as Christ will take out the faithful ones from the Church as His wife and redeem the earth.

And just as Ruth became the heir to the Davidic line, the Messianic line, so also will the bride of Christ. The bride of Christ, whom God will transform into a spirit of glory, will reign with Christ as His bride for one thousand years, as heirs to the Davidic line, the Messianic line.

SECTION 2 — DAVID TO ECCLESIASTES

Example 14) David and Saul **1 Samuel 16:1**

The prophet Samuel was from the tribe of Ephraim and ministered before the Lord as a child, wearing a linen ephod -- a garment worn by priests. He later had two sons whom he made judges over Israel, but they were dishonest and took bribes. Therefore, the people of Israel refused to listen to Samuel or to God's word. Rather, they preferred a king to rule over them, one like the other nations. Although God had given the people of Israel His word, the prophets and the judges to guide them, the people

wanted to follow the practices of their neighbors instead of the living God. God eventually gave them a king like those of the other nations.

God chose Saul, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, to be the first king of Israel. He was very tall and handsome and was pleasing in the eyes of the people of Israel. God told Samuel to anoint Saul and proclaim him king in the presence of the people. And Samuel did as the Lord commanded.

Samuel also said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord.” (1 Samuel 15:1)

Saul, a type of Satan, fell into disobedience and chose to do his own will instead of God's will. Saul's sinful choices resulted in tragedy each time. In the beginning of his reign, he chose to offer his own sacrifices before the Lord, instead of obeying the Lord's commandments in preparing for battle. He made a foolish oath to his army which also caused him to go against his own son, Jonathon. He disobeyed God's instructions by not completely destroying King Agag, king of the Amalekites (an evil people in the sight of the Lord — a tribe of Nephilim). Therefore, God was displeased with Saul and disqualified him as king. Samuel informed Saul of his replacement and that he was rejected as king by the Lord.

Then Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.” (1 Samuel 15:22)

Like Saul, Christians can make the exact error of rejecting the Word of the Lord if they choose to do their own works, works of the flesh. Christians can be deceived into thinking that there is a part of their carnal nature that is good and believing that this can be pleasing to God. But Scripture says otherwise.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God;

for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-8)

Saul confessed his sins and pleaded that Samuel would return to him, but Samuel (a type of the Holy Spirit) did not return. It was too late for Saul. God's judgment was already in place and there was no room for repentance. The Lord had already chosen another king to lead Israel.

God chose David to replace Saul as king, one who would walk right and obey His commandments. But Saul, though disqualified, remained on the throne until God had prepared David, son of Jesse, as the replacement. In this we see a principle of Biblical government whereby even a rejected ruler is allowed to continue his rule until God's allotted time, as only God can appoint and replace crowned rulers. The account of David and Saul is a pictorial representation, a type of the circumstances that exist with regards to Christ and Satan. Satan was God's anointed ruler over the earth— "*You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones*" (**Ezekiel 28:14**).

However, after Satan's fall, God made manifest His plan for the redemption of man by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, declaring Him incumbent ruler over Satan. However, Christ is not exercising this rule yet, not until God's allotted time, the 7th Day, the Millennial reign of Christ, a time patterned after the six days of work, followed by a seventh day of rest in the **Genesis** account. At the end of this age, Christ will redeem the inheritance and will take the crown from Satan. It will be then that Christ will wear the crown and ascend the throne as Ruler of all people. When the time came for David to take the scepter he was anointed king by Samuel, and Saul was removed from the place of rulership.

In the intervening period we see David exiled from the kingdom of Saul, and while in a distant place many who were dissatisfied with conditions in Saul's kingdom left all they had to join David.

David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented

gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him. (1 Samuel 22:1, 2)

These were Jews who had aligned themselves with David, making life choices with a view to David one day taking the crown from Saul, exercising the kingly authority he was given, and they by his side also in positions of authority. They lived their lives by faith based upon what God had said concerning the future rule of the son of Jesse.

In the antitype, between the time of Satan's rejection and Christ redeeming the inheritance, Christ remains in a distant place. Those Christians who are faithful are the ones who are distressed and dissatisfied with affairs in Satan's kingdom, who are leaving all they have to join Christ as outcasts of this world.

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (John 15:19)

Faithful, mature Christians are looking to the time when Christ shall ascend His throne and when they as coheirs shall ascend the throne with Him.

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I sat with My Father on His throne." (Revelation 3:21)

And just as David became the captain of those drawn to him so we find this of Christ—

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10)

After David began his kingship position, Saul continued on his path of unrighteousness by personally trying to kill David. God sent a distressing spirit against Saul, yet he again tried to kill David, attempting to get his son Jonathan to assist. After Samuel died, Saul cried out to the Lord, but the Lord no longer answered him. So Saul consulted a witch to awaken Samuel for help. But Samuel told him that his days were over and that the Lord had departed from him. The following day when the Philistines

attacked and killed his sons, Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword.

David began his reign in Judah for three years, and then he became king over all Israel. David ruled a total of 40 years, a period of completeness. As a type of Christ, David acted as prophet **Acts 2:29-34**), priest (**2 Samuel 6:14**) and king (**2 Samuel 5**). He fully obeyed the Lord. Therefore God made a covenant with David, a promise that He would establish a throne for David's seed, a kingdom that shall be established forever.

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. (2 Samuel 7:12-14)

And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:16)

We can see this covenant being fulfilled in **Matthew** chapter **one**, which names all the seed of David beginning with his son, Solomon and ending with Jesus, the Christ.

Satan, though disqualified, presently holds the scepter. However, the Day will come when Christ with His bride will take over Satan's position as ruler. God has given man an allotted time to show himself worthy, and when the time is up, God will replace Satan with His first-born Son/sons: Christ, the bride (Church) and Israel. And in that Day, God will have fulfilled the Davidic covenant, and His kingdom will be established forever. Knowing this, Satan continues on his path of thwarting God's plan for man by deceiving man to bring about his disobedience, thereby disqualifying him. But in the end, Satan will be put down and Christ with His co-heirs will reign forever.

As a type of Christ and His bride, we have revealed in **1 Samuel 25** the relationship between David and his wife, Abigail. Abigail is presented as a wife to a lost man, Nabal, and is kept from the presence of David and of the sacrifices he offered. But Abigail was willing to listen to the servant

when he told of David's sacrifices. So she left Nabal to go and meet David. When she met him, she fell at his feet, and confessed her sins.

In **1 Samuel 25:32-33**, Abigail's confession was acknowledged, her sins were forgiven and she was accepted by David. In **verse 37**, Nabal, the unfaithful believer, was struck by God and died. David then invited Abigail to be his bride. As she approached David, she offered to be his servant and wash his feet, but David made her queen instead. Abigail, as a type of the bride, represents individuals who become saved by grace through faith in Christ, who are faithfully obedient to God's word, performing good works through the Spirit, ultimately to be found worthy to be Christ's bride.

Example 15) Solomon
1 Kings 3:1

Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba, was anointed king of Israel and Judah following David's death. Solomon loved the Lord just as his father David, and God appeared to Solomon twice. The first time He appeared to Solomon, God blessed him with a gift offering. This is what Solomon requested:

Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. (1 Kings 3:9)

The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words;

See, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David

walked, then I will lengthen your days." (1 Kings 3:10-14)

God granted Solomon wisdom and prosperity. During his reign, all of Israel and Judah prospered and there was peace among them. It was during this time that God allowed Solomon to build the holy temple, following 480 years from the Exodus. The temple was built according to plans that David received from the Lord and passed on to Solomon.

In the future, God's plans for the Millennium will involve anointing His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings who will build a much bigger and better temple, one that will never be destroyed. God's example in Solomon was to give us a type of Christ, except that Christ would be the One to overcome.

The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. (Luke 11:31)

All the earth sought the presence of King Solomon to hear him speak and he surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. God had appeared to Solomon the second time, after he finished building the temple. And the Lord said to Solomon,

"Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep my commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight." (1 Kings 9:4-7)

Solomon made the crucial mistake of not heeding God's warning. Taking many wives violated the standard of monogamy established by God in the

beginning (**Genesis 2:24, 25**). He marries many foreign women outside of the people of Israel, something that God had forbidden Israel to do. God had warned the people of Israel not to intermarry with the outside, since they would be enticed to follow their gods. And this is exactly what happened to Solomon, who went after Baal, Molech, and other gods of all his wives; and built altars, temples and made wooden images of them. Solomon worshiped these gods and fell completely away from the One and Only True God.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.

Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem. And for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.
(1 Kings 11:3-8)

The Lord became angry with Solomon and told him that He would take away most of the kingdom out of his hand, except one. God would keep one for the sake of his father David and it would be given to his son so that the Davidic line would continue to be a lamp to the nations until the Messiah comes. And so it happened that Israel later was divided into two kingdoms, the north and the south. The northern kingdom of Israel collapsed in 722 BC when the Assyrians destroyed its capital, Samaria. The southern kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC.

The example of Solomon provides a great lesson for Christians. Faithful Christians are to assemble in fellowship with one another and not associate with the unfaithful, otherwise they also may turn away from the Lord. In time, because of their close association with the unfaithful, they may be enticed to follow their sinful ways. And there is serious consequence for living this way. Rather, Christians must heed God's

commands just as He commanded Solomon in **1 Kings 9**. Despite all of his wisdom and possessions, Solomon made foolish and grave choices. In writing the Book of **Ecclesiastes**, Solomon gave both warning and encouragement so that his readers could avoid his mistakes.

Example 16) Elijah

1 Kings 17:1

As a prophet similar to Moses, Elijah had a mission to fulfill for God. The first time he is mentioned in **1 Kings 17**, he is there to denounce the worship of the pagan god, Baal, to the evil King Ahab and the people of Israel. He performed signs and miracles to prove that there is only one true Living God. Elijah had no fear in man, for he knew the power of God. Because the Canaanite belief was that only the pagan god, Baal, could control the rain, Elijah announced to King Ahab that he would cause no dew or rain to fall on the earth, except by his command from God.

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." (1 Kings 17:1)

Elijah performed another miracle in front of the Jewish people at Mount Carmel - challenging the prophets of the god, Baal, to cause fire to appear under the wood. If the pagan god could not perform this, then he would show them that the True God could.

"Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." (1 Kings 18:24)

And so it happened that the god, Baal, did not answer the people's call or perform the miracle of fire. So Elijah mocked the prophets of the god, Baal.

And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:27-29)

But when Elijah prayed to the Lord, the Lord heard him and answered his call.

“Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.”

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. (1 Kings 18:37-40)

Following this great victory over paganism, Elijah told his servant to go check for rain seven times (denoting completion; the 7th day) and after the seventh time, heavy rain appeared. When King Ahab's evil wife, Jezebel (who had previously massacred the prophets of the Lord) heard of this, she responded with revenge and sought to kill him.

Jezebel was a powerful person and exceedingly evil. She could influence King Ahab to be wicked, to follow her beliefs and pagan ways; to follow her god, Baal. Her father was both king and priest of Baal in Sidon; similarly, she was princess and priestess of Baal. King Ahab became a full-fledged worshiper of Baal, the Canaanite (Phoenician) deity, in which he established an altar, a temple and a wooden image. In this, King Ahab went a considerable distance in establishing the Baal cult as the state religion of Israel. The sin that King Ahab and his wife Jezebel brought into the nation of Israel was great -- a total rejection of the Living God.

Elijah escaped from Jezebel and it was at this time that God told him to go to the mountain before Him. God gave Elijah instructions to anoint kings for Israel and anoint a successor, Elisha in his place as Israel's prophet. Elijah had done all that the Lord commanded, completing his mission. In the Lord's time, He raptured Elijah to heaven, as recorded in **2 Kings 2:11**,

Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

In the Old Testament, the only other prophet ever to be raptured to heaven alive besides Elijah was Enoch.

The Book of **Matthew** mentions Elijah again. The context of **Matthew 17:1-13** is with a view to the second coming of Christ. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that after six days, or six thousand years, He will return in glory. Before Peter, James and John, Jesus was transfigured in glory just as He will be when He returns:

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves, and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:1, 2)

This vision of Christ transfigured in glory revealed Him as King of kings at His second coming and was for the disciple's testimony after Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus told them not to mention the vision until after His resurrection, so that believers would understand their purpose in Christ --- a picture of their resurrection when Christ returns in glory for all believers. If they told the vision before His death and resurrection, then the people would not understand because the mission had not yet been accomplished. Immediately after His transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, two of the firstfruits that have already been resurrected with Christ, appeared talking with Him.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. (Matthew 17:3)

Then, the voice of God came out of the cloud from heaven to recognize Jesus, God's beloved Son. When the disciples heard the voice, they were terrified and fainted. But Jesus touched them and told them to "*Arise, and do not be afraid*" (a picture of the rapture and resurrection of the saints).

Jesus gave Peter, James, and John an eyewitness view of the end of the age — Christ's return in glory, Moses and Elijah present with Him and their own resurrection. In his Epistle, Peter confirms the vision, being an eyewitness to it, that it was a preview of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory:

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the Day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts... (2 Peter 1:16-19)

The disciples thought that the vision of Elijah appearing to them was the sign of the end of the age. When Jesus commanded them to tell no one of the vision until after His death and resurrection, the disciples were confused. They asked Him why the scribes say that Elijah must come first.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:11-13)

John the Baptist was the one who ministered "*in the spirit and power of Elijah*" in preparing the way for Christ (**Luke 1:17**). John was the anti-type of Elijah, yet the religious leaders of Israel not only rejected him, but

also murdered him and their Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus affirmed to the disciples that Elijah *is* coming first and *will* restore all things (**Malachi 4:5, 6**). And because the restoration of the people of Israel has not yet happened, we could understand this to mean that Elijah will appear once again during the Tribulation and may be one of the two witnesses. The two witnesses are mentioned in **Revelation 11:3-6**,

These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all the plagues, as often as they desire. (Revelation 11:6)

These two witnesses will have the authority to prevent rain during the days of their prophecy, identifying them with Elijah, whose prayer caused it not to rain for three and a half years (**1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17**). Turning the waters into blood (**Exodus 7:17-21**) and striking the earth with plagues (**Exodus 7-11**) is reminiscent of Moses.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:17, 18)

Elijah was truly an overcomer; one who was faithfully obedient to God's commands. When he finished the race and completed his mission, God raptured him to heaven. We also, who are faithful to the end, should look forward to our rapture and reward.

Example 17) Ezra and Nehemiah **Ezra 7:1/Nehemiah 1:1**

The Books of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** go hand in hand, two people God sent to exhort the remnant of Israel to obey His law. The remnant returned to the ruins of Jerusalem with the hope of rebuilding the nation. God brought His people back from Babylon, rebuilt the temple, and restored the conduct of true worship.

Both Ezra and Nehemiah were commissioned by King Artaxerxes. Ezra led the group of returning Israelites in 458 B.C. as priest, scribe and reformer. Nehemiah led the group afterwards in 444 B.C. as appointed

governor. Both worked in restoring worship and dedicating the newly rebuilt wall in Jerusalem.

The Book of **Ezra** and the Book of **Nehemiah** reveals the restoration of the nation of Israel and their subsequent falling away. The prophets Jeremiah and Daniel among others had prophesied the restorations of Israel and the desolations that would follow throughout the generations, all due to Israel's disobedience towards God. At the end of this age, Israel's final restoration will take place.

For thus says the Lord: "After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good work toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive." (Jeremiah 29:10-14)

Jeremiah 29:10 relates to Israel at the end of Man's Day, when God will once again deal with Israel unto repentance, to restore them back to their land. Israel will finally be established in their land as a nation, within a theocracy, ruling with Christ, and they will finally have peace.

Both Nehemiah and Ezra describe the events leading to the return of the Judeans from captivity in Babylon. Both Books describe the restoration process of the people and the city --- a prophecy revealing how the restoration will take place at the end of this age. God will build His temple and His kingdom where Christ will rule and reign for one thousand years on the Holy Mountain Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Worship will be restored and all the nations will come to see Him (**Jeremiah 30, 31; Isaiah 11:11-15**). Most of the prophets, beginning with Isaiah, speak of Israel's final restoration and Christ's earthly kingdom to be set up in Jerusalem in the coming age.

The extraordinary prophecy of God's promised restoration of His people is recorded in detail in the Books of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**. It is a realization of how awesome and powerful God is, when He will gather together a multitude of His people from all over the world and bring them back to their Promised Land. The message in Ezra's and Nehemiah's day, as well as for today, is that the God of Israel is faithful to His promises. He will completely restore His people when they seek and call upon Him. And we can be rest assured this extends to Christians as well.

Example 18) **Esther**
Esther 1:1

The Book of **Esther** presents a complete history of God's dealings with the nation of Israel — past, present and future. It provides detailed information pertaining to events that will take place in the future, during the Tribulation — that which coincides with Daniel's Seventieth Week and with events in the Book of **Revelation**. The Book of **Esther** begins during a time when the Israelites were once again under Gentile subjection. King Ahasuerus of Medo-Persia (modern day Iran) ruled during the years 486-465 B.C. He made a great feast to make mention of his power and riches in his kingdom. Those in positions of power in the kingdom were invited to the feast and it was proclaimed on the *third* year of his reign to those both small and great (**Esther 1:4**).

The feast lasted for *seven* days. On the seventh day (the number “seven” showing “completeness for that which is in view”), the command was given to bring Queen Vashti to him, but she refused to come at the king's command, so the king became very angry. Because of the actions of the queen, a decree was issued to set aside her position and replace it with another.

...that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.
(Esther 1:19)

Then the king's servants suggested that a search be done to replace Vashti—*...a woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.*
(Esther 2:4)

In the Book of **Esther**, King Ahasuerus is presented as a type of God the Father and Queen Vashti as a type of Israel. **Esther** chapter **one** has to do with 1) God and a province in His kingdom, 2) with Israel's calling relative to this province, 3) with Israel's refusal to come at the King's command, 4) and that which the King did about the matter.

The reference to the *third year* and the *seventh year* in **Esther** chapter **one** and **two** is associated with the foundational framework in the beginning of Genesis. From **Genesis 1:1**, God's dealing with man involved six days (6,000 years) of restorative work followed by a seventh day (7th 1000 year period) of rest (Messianic era). Since Adam's fall, God began his work of restoring man back to the position for which he was originally created --- to rule and reign. Throughout this course of restoration, God called Abraham to be the one through whom all nations would be blessed. But God called Israel a "*disobedient people*," a people who had rejected Him and His Word through the sin of unbelief. Though God sent Moses to bring them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan as an inheritance, the nation of Israel fell into disobedience. This disobedience was brought to a climax at Christ's first coming, when they rejected and crucified their Messiah. Since Israel's invitation from Jesus to "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" was refused, God punished Israel by setting her aside as a nation and scattering her among the Gentiles. This is what **Esther** chapter **one** typifies when Vashti refused to come at the king's command.

Because of Queen Vashti's refusal to come, she was rejected as queen. On the *third year*, her royal standing was taken from her and *given to another that is better than she*. And this account typifies Israel, who, because of disobedience to God during the time of Christ's first coming, was rejected as queen. Israel's royal standing in the *heavenly* kingdom was taken away and given to another nation who would bear fruit — the Church. God's dealings with Israel had been set aside temporarily and the Church was now in view until the end of the sixth year.

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." (Matthew 21:43)

"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" (Acts 28:28)

Israel was called into existence to occupy *a particular position at a particular time*. Israel refused, and the nation was set aside. This is what **Esther** chapter **one** is about.

However, the day is coming when God will once again turn to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation, establishing Israel in *the position to which the nation was called, during a time that God has established*. This is what **Esther** chapter **two** is about.

The appointed times given in the Book of **Esther** — the third year on the seventh day (Queen Vashti) and the seventh year on the tenth day (Queen Esther) are all appointed times set by God that coincide with Man's Day to the Millennium, for Israel and the Church. This is the reason why the Book of **Esther** (type of Israel) and the Book of **Ruth** (type of the Church) had appointed times for the women to prepare for their redeemer:

Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve month's preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of Myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.
(Esther 2:12)

Esther chapter **two** is about the search for a new queen and placing that queen in a royal position in the kingdom. Proper preparations had to be made for meeting the king for a period of twelve months. This typifies God's wife, Israel. At the close of this age, God will once again deal with the nation of Israel, to complete their restoration and place them in a ruling position in God's earthly kingdom. This will be the seventh one-thousandth year from Adam, on the tenth day (the number "ten" showing "completeness; all.")

During the search for a new queen, Esther had properly prepared for her meeting with the king and therefore was chosen above the other maidens.

Esther chapters **three** through **ten** provide further commentary to the events leading to Israel's restoration at the end of this age. Mordecai, who raised Esther, was seated in the king's gate outside the palace. Both he and Esther typify Israel in regards to future regality. They both had royal positions awarded to them, but they were not yet exercising regal power. At the appointed time both positions of Esther and Mordecai are then

exercised. And the same thing applies to Israel.

After Israel calls upon the Lord and after Christ returns, then they will be restored, exercising regal positions in the King's gate over the Gentile nations of the earth. It will happen at God's appointed time --- the 7th day.

By comparing the woman in **Revelation 12** to Israel, we can see that she was wearing a crown, like Esther, specifically, a "*Stephanos*" crown, which means "a prize, a symbol of honor." This type of crown will be worn by the nation of Israel on earth and the bride of Christ in heaven. A "*Diadem*" crown, which means "to bound permanently about the head, to succeed, to come after ---- exercising regal power," will be taken by force from Satan and be worn by Christ (**Revelation 19:12**).

Haman is mentioned beginning in **Esther** chapter **three**, who is said to have been promoted to the seat above other princes in the king's palace. He is identified as an "Agagite," which associates him with Agag, the Amalekite king who lived during Saul's day and sought to destroy the Israelites. The Amalekites were the first of the nations to war against Israel after the Exodus. Both the Amalekites and Haman were enemies of the Jewish people and sought to destroy them. Therefore, Haman in the Book of **Esther** typifies the Antichrist, who also will be in a ruling position during the Tribulation. And just as King Ahasuerus appointed Haman, so also God the Father had appointed Satan in the beginning to his position of power in His kingdom, therefore he will be wearing a diadem crown and will give power and authority to the Antichrist who will seek to destroy the Jews.

The Gentile nations openly exalted Haman by bowing down to him, but Mordecai refused to bow down. For Mordecai to bow down to Haman would have meant an open display of worship to Haman, resulting in an open denial of his faith in the One and Only True God. This is the reason Haman sought to slay not only Mordecai but all of the Jews as well, since they refused to worship him. And this same exact occurrence is seen in the Book of **Revelation** with the Antichrist seeking to destroy the Jewish people. The 144,000 Jews who will be sent by God to preach His message over all the earth will also refuse to bow down and worship Antichrist.

And the dragon was enraged with the woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai.

Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus--the people of Mordecai. (Esther 3:5, 6)

Haman is able to get the king to sign off on a decree for the annihilation of all the Jews throughout all the land. This decree brought the Jews into a terrified state — they fasted, wept and wailed. Esther commanded a three day fast among the Jews (**Esther 4**). Their fasting denotes a strong but veiled appeal to God to intervene in a time of severe crisis.

This account typifies Israel's suffering during the Tribulation when God will finally bring them to a place of repentance and they will cry out calling upon the Lord.

On the third day, Esther goes before the king unannounced. Although this is going against the law bringing her life in jeopardy, she calls upon the king in order to save the Jewish people, since she is also a Jew. The king finds favor in her sight and asks her,

"What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!" (Esther 5:3)

Like Esther, Israel will have the same call to the Lord in the future and He will deliver them. The things having to do with the Antichrist's reign will occur so that God's purpose for Israel may be fulfilled. God will deliver the Jewish people into Antichrist's hands for a period of time, so that Israel may repent and realize their calling.

Haman was put down and Antichrist will also be put down when Christ returns the second time. Following this, Esther and Mordecai were given authority to exercise rulership in place of Haman. In the antitype, Israel will replace Antichrist and will exercise power and authority over the

Gentile nations. Haman was hanged by the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, and likewise, the Antichrist will be thrown in the lake of fire burning with brimstone forever.

After Haman was put down, the Jews assembled together and celebrated. In the antitype, during the Messianic kingdom, Israel will also enjoy rest and feasting with the Lord.

And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,

as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday, that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.
(Esther 10:20-22)

And, in keeping with the preceding, Scripture clearly reveals when God will restore His people, Israel and their land ---- that is, not until Antichrist is revealed, is reigning and is brought down at the second coming of Christ at the end of Man's Day --- a time that still remains yet future.

Example 19) Job

We have covered the history and spiritual content of the nation of Israel from the Book of **Genesis** through **Esther**, and now we begin to view the personal experiences of God's people from the Book of **Job**.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. (Job 1:1)

Job was strong in the Lord and was faithfully obedient to His Word. He knew God's plan and purpose; therefore, he feared God, for he knew one day he would have to account for his works before Him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)

Job was blessed with a large family, prosperity, and wealth. He was known as "*the greatest of all the people of the East*" (**Job 1:3**). Yet he stayed faithful to God, gave offerings to God for all he had, and lived righteously.

The Book of **Job** begins with a description of Job's character and his possessions. Then it directs the reader to the throne of God in heaven. The angels, including Satan, came before the Lord to present themselves. Satan, although a rebel ruler, still had access to God's court. Presently, Satan continues to rule the earth directly under God, with the power and authority to rule coming from God's throne. But the time will come when Satan will be thrown out of heaven forever, will be defeated on earth by Christ and ultimately be cast into the lake of fire.

"But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him." (Daniel 7:26, 27)

Though the Lord knew Satan's whereabouts, He proceeded to ask Satan where he came from, so that Satan could give an account of his actions to the Lord.

And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." (Job 1:7)

A similar function of the question was posed to Adam after the fall:

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)

Ever since his rebellion against God, Satan accuses, deceives and tempts believers to stray them away from God and from their calling. Satan is indeed the enemy of our soul. In fact, the Hebrew word for Satan means "Adversary." God warns us to be strong in the Lord in order to resist him. Satan's main focus has been to walk the earth seeking to disqualify Christians from their high calling, which is to rule and reign with Christ. This present world is Satan's territory, and he does not want to give it up.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Peter 5:8, 9)

God proceeded to tell Satan about His servant Job and how faithful he was. Satan questioned Job's motives for fearing and serving God; since God had protected him and his household, what did Job have to fear? Satan asserted that Job would surely curse God if his prosperity and blessings were removed. Since Satan holds the scepter, he had the power under God's authority to test Job, but his power was limited to God's sovereign control. God allowed him to test Job, but he could not harm him.

Job loses his property, his servants and his children-- all in one day. Job showed intense grief over his loss, and then he acknowledged God's all-powerful control over all circumstances.

*Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head;
and he fell to the ground and worshiped.
And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's
womb, And naked shall I return there.*

*The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this
Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.
(Job 1:20-22)*

The tearing of his robe signified that Job was in deep grief, yet in a voluntary act of humility, he fell to the floor to acknowledge God's sovereign control. He did not blame God for his tragedies but humbly accepted God's will.

Job is an excellent example of one who is faithful under trials and suffering. God's aim for allowing Job's faith to be tested, and that of every believer, is to refine and mature. Trials are for the purpose of preparing children for the Millennial Kingdom as firstborn sons. Part of this preparation involves our sanctification, separating ourselves as pilgrims of this world. It is also the realization that all that we have, whether material possessions or family, belongs to God our Creator and we must trust in Him in all things.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9)

Peter tells us to greatly rejoice when we have been stricken with trials, as it is another opportunity for us to mature in the faith and overcome. At the end of our faith we will receive the salvation of our soul.

James also knew this mystery of rejoicing in trials, for he looked forward to his reward in the future kingdom of heaven:

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2, 3)

The word "patience" means "to stand fast." The more we learn to stand fast during affliction, the more we become perfect (mature) thereby making us complete (whole). How we handle the trials in this life will determine our fate at the Judgment seat of Christ --- for our faith, or lack of, will be tested by fire. If our works pass the test then we will be found worthy to enter the kingdom. If we do not endure with good works, we will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven for 1000 years.

Satan incited God against Job the second time by attacking his health. And the Lord allowed Satan this test, but he was to spare Job's life. So Satan struck Job with painful boils from head to toe, but Job remained faithful to God and did not sin. Even his wife rebelled against him for holding on to his faith. But Job answered:

"Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10a)

When Job's three friends came to visit and comfort him, they tore their clothes and wept when they saw him for they could not recognize him. Because of his pain, Job cursed the day he was born and wished God would let him die.

Though Job's three friends cared for Job, they judged him wrongly by implying that his suffering was a result of his sins and therefore God was punishing him. Job then calls them, "*miserable comforters*," but Job maintains his integrity and prays to God for relief. After being accused from his 'friends,' Job ends his conversation with them.

Then Elihu, another friend comes into the scene and accuses both Job and his three friends. He is angry at the friends for condemning Job, however he also accused Job of having only justified himself. In addition, Elihu feels that the problem with Job is that he had been treating God as though he were God's equal, for Job had questioned God's motives.

"How long? Will you not look away from me, and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself? Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity?" (Job 7:19-21)

Christians also tend to question God when they are stricken with trials and tribulations. They tend to treat God as though they are equal to Him. Instead, they should humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, asking for strength, endurance and patience to overcome. God is in control and He cares for us. When we overcome adversity by faith, He will exalt us in due time.

After Elihu had finished speaking, the Lord gives His answer to Job. God overwhelms Job into submission in order to restore him as the Lord's

servant. By revealing His omnipotence, God seeks to build Job's trust and security in Him. God asks him many questions, among which are:

*"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"
"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?
Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?" (Job 38:4)*

After hearing what the Lord had to say, Job repents to God for questioning Him. And after he repented, God spoke to Eliphaz and told him that he and the others had not done right with their false accusations against Job and that Job was right in maintaining his innocence. God restored Job as His faithful servant and rewarded him by restoring his prosperity with more wealth than he had before.

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning... (Job 42:12)

Job, as a type of Christ, overcame his trials and tribulations just as Christ overcame His sufferings, thereby being able to inherit more blessings in the *latter* days than His beginning. The "latter days" is a reference to the Seventh Day.

God gave Job a total of *ten* children (*three* daughters and *seven* sons), a number showing completeness. The number "three" refers to "resurrection," revealing the daughters as the bride of Christ; and the number "seven" showing completeness, revealing the brothers as the nation of Israel. Their "father" gave an "inheritance" to the daughters and among their brothers. This typifies the redemption of the inheritance amongst the bride of Christ and the Father's wife, Israel in the latter days, the Seventh Day, the Messianic Era.

In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. (Job 42:15)

The trials of Job are examples set forth for our admonition. *All* Christians will encounter suffering and trials. Under the authority of God, Satan tempts. God allows His children to have their faith tested for the purpose of qualifying them for the Millennial kingdom. God allows it for good. Satan does it for evil.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Another example can be seen with the temptations of Jesus. Jesus encountered trials of His faith, as God allowed Satan to tempt Him to prove that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, absolutely incapable of sin. God the Father permitted this to happen to His only begotten Son and again to Job, for the reason that He could prove that they would remain faithful under these temptations from the hand of Satan. And God knew that Job would prevail, just as He knew Christ would. Job suffered tremendously for the fight of his faith --- for the saving of his soul. Christ also suffered greatly and died for us all.

Two factors determine that God knew Job's outcome. First, God is omniscient; therefore He knows everything before it happens. Second, God will not allow Christians to be tempted beyond what they can handle. He will make a way of escape from their trials so that they are able to bear it. When trials do come, He wants to see our faith in Him fully.

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13a)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy...

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:12-19)

Christ cannot sin when tempted or tested. Jesus Christ is God the Father manifested in the flesh. Jesus Christ, begotten by God, has within Him no lust nor tendency or possibility to sin. But man does. Since the fall of Adam, man is born in sin and therefore when he is tempted by Satan, he is

drawn away by his own lust and when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin (**James 1:14, 15**). For this reason, God instructs all Christians to put on the whole armor of God, so that they will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

Satan is the one who tempts with evil intentions. However, when Christians sin, God may chasten them afterwards, just as a father disciplines his son, in order to teach them to live righteously. And He does this for the salvation of their souls in that future Day.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God;" for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:12-15)

In **Matthew 4:1**, Satan is revealed as the tempter:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Again in **Matthew 6:13**, the prayer reveals Satan as the tempter:

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Many Christians have a difficult time understanding the Book of **Job**. Why did God allow Job, a righteous and holy man, to suffer the loss of his family and all of his possessions if he was serving and pleasing God? How could God allow Satan to destroy all that Job had? In order to properly understand the Book of **Job**, we must first have a deep understanding of God's Word and know God's purpose for man in *this* age. Many Church leaders give the false belief that God will *always* reward the righteous in *this* age. But the Word says otherwise. Christians will be allowed to be tested with various trials to determine their faith until the end. If they endure, they will be rewarded during the *next* age -- the Kingdom Age, when Christ returns for His bride.

The testing of our faith is essential for Christian maturity and necessary to be found approved at the Judgment seat of Christ. A Christian who endures trials is mature and has been promised the crown of life in the age to come. How does one endure trials? He overcomes by faith in God. He asks God for strength and wisdom through them. The wisdom God gives provides the means to overcome them. Trials are tools which refine and purify our faith, producing patient endurance. For this reason we are to consider them opportunities for rejoicing, for when we pass the test, we will be glorified in that future Day. Like Christ, Job was faithful to the end even under such devastating circumstances, because of the hope that was set before him.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth. (Job 19:25)

Example 20) Book of Psalms

Though the Book of Psalms leads us through the lows and highs of human experience, primarily Israel's experience, it is mainly *prophetic*. **Psalms 2:8, 9** tells of the day when Christ Jesus shall rule with a rod of iron. A companion Scripture can be seen in **Revelation 19:11-21**, which tells of the day when "*Christ rules with a rod of iron and treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.*" **Psalms 24** speaks prophetically of the Lord Jesus Christ and **Psalms 2** and **Psalms 110** share a focus on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom.

Psalms 50 speaks of the return of the Lord and His righteous judgment upon His people.

In addition, the Book of **Psalms** gives instructions on how to attain the salvation of the soul. King David wrote most of the Psalms, which was used for songs, prayers and worship in ancient Israel. Today, the Psalms continue to be used in worship as they provide guidance for the Christian. Many of the Psalms can be identified as certain types by their theme:

- 1) The royal Psalms often point forward to the coming rule of the Savior King, Christ Jesus.
- 2) The Psalms of Zion focus on the prophecies of Jerusalem. They emphasize Jerusalem as God's choice for the site of His holy temple during the Millennium.
- 3) The penitential Psalms are confessions of sin and requests for forgiveness to the Lord.
- 4) The wisdom Psalms, also found in the Book of **Proverbs**, present instructions on soul salvation, providing sharp contrasts between the righteous and the wicked.
- 5) The imprecatory Psalms contain prayers for guidance, asking God for protection from the wicked. A subcategory would be a lament Psalms, which is in a time of distress, usually asking God for protection from enemies.
- 6) The Passover Psalms, also prophetic, celebrate the great acts of the Lord in delivering His people from Egypt and points forward to the deliverance that will come through the second coming of Christ Jesus.
- 7) The Hallel Psalms, named from the Hebrew word "praise," form the final group of Psalms at the end of the Book. These Psalms praise God Almighty for His works, His Word, His salvation and judgment.

Overall, the Psalms cover Christ's second return, the establishment of His kingdom and how to attain the salvation of the soul.

Psalms 1, a wisdom Psalm, distinguishes between an overcomer and one who is overcome -- the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked:

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the
scornful;*

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he
meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree, Planted by the
rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf
also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

*The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind
drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the
judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

*For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the
ungodly shall perish.*

In the same manner of introduction in the Beatitudes of **Matthew** chapter **five**, this first Psalm begins with the word *blessed*, which means "fortunate" and is linked to receiving divine favor in Christ's future kingdom. Likewise, the Beatitudes provide instruction on how to inherit Christ's kingdom.

A person who *walks* means to "walk beside" or "behave." Instructions are given *not* to behave or become deeply involved in the counsel of the ungodly or in wickedness. Therefore, an overcomer should not behave like sinners and the scornful.

The only consistent way to overcome the sinful desires of our human nature (the flesh) is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit as He works through our spirit. Walking each moment by faith in God's Word under the Spirit's control assures absolute victory over our sinful nature.

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the
flesh. (Galatians 5:16)*

Rather than finding enjoyment in associations with wicked persons or in wickedness, the godly Christian finds deep enjoyment in associations with

godly people and with the Word of God. This means that the godly person continually seeks maturity in the Word on a daily basis. And as the person matures in the Word (to include the Word of the kingdom, the whole counsel of God) he allows the Spirit to produce works which are pleasing to God and productive to His plan and purpose.

But ungodly Christians are unstable, who are easily affected by the world and the sinful desires of the flesh. When judgment comes, the ungodly will not stand; they will be cast out of the kingdom to outer darkness. They will be separated from the righteous overcomers who inherit the kingdom. God *knows* (has an intimate, personal knowledge) the righteous, but He has no intimate connection with carnal Christians.

Recorded in **Matthew 7:21-23**, a word-picture is presented of carnal Christians as they stand before Christ at His judgment seat:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you (had an intimate, personal relationship), depart from Me (out of the kingdom), you who practice lawlessness!' "

This is typical of Christians who did not walk (behave continually) according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh. They attempt to do works according to their own desires and not according to the will of God. God never knew them or had an intimate, personal relationship with them because they did not seek Him from the Word of God.

Other wisdom Psalms that provide instructions for the salvation of the soul are: **Psalms 14, 15, 27, 31, 34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 49, 52, 62, 63, 71, 73, 103, 104, 107, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128, 139, and 145.**

Psalms 15 provides the characteristics required to obtain the salvation of the soul in that future Day:

The Character of Those Who May Dwell with the Lord

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor,

Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord;

He who swears to his own hurt and does not change, He who does not put out his money at usury,

Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalms 15)

Psalms 15 begins with two questions: Who is qualified to assemble with the Lord in His tabernacle? Who is qualified to reside with the Lord in Mount Zion, the Messianic Kingdom?

Only those who are spiritually saved are entered into this race and considered for qualification. For when one believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of the Lord entered into his spirit. It is now up to the believer to allow the Spirit to work through him for good works, works done in accordance to the Word of God, thereby qualifying him for the salvation of his soul and entrance into the kingdom to rule with Him in that future Day.

What are the qualifications? **Psalms 15** reveals the qualifications:

- 1) *He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.*

As we allow the Spirit to teach us the Word, our faith will grow and in time it will change our character. Walking in the Spirit is walking

uprightly. This means going against the flesh. **Galatians 5:19** distinguishes between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;

of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit (good works) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-25)

As one receives with meekness the Word of God and implants the Word in his heart and mind, then he will have a renewed character. He will be strong in the faith and produce the fruit of the Spirit which will be able to save his soul. But if he chooses a life without the Word, walking in the flesh, then he will produce works of “hay, wood, and straw,” and sin will engulf his days so that his outcome will be the loss of his soul.

2) *He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend.*

The sinful nature that inspires evil words is beyond our control. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit within us can we bring this destructive force under control.

But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of dead poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:8-10)

The Christian who possesses godly wisdom will meekly show it with

works, not just words. They will be slow to speak and quick to act, in love and care to all fellow believers. An evil tongue produces strife and turmoil. Bitterness, envy, jealousy and selfish behavior thoroughly corrupt a person, but a godly character is peaceable and pure. When we look to godly wisdom, our character becomes like Christ, and we no longer fall into the falsehood and wickedness of the world and the sinful motivations of the flesh. Instead, we treat our friends and neighbors as God treats His faithful friends --- with mercy, grace, care, gentleness, love and blessings.

3) *In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord.*

A Christian who is mature in the faith and lives holy will hate the actions and tongues of evildoers. In today's evil world, the wicked tongue and immoral actions are so prevalent in television, theatre, radio, and the internet. Satan's evil works through the media entices Christians to live an ungodly life. And children are exposed to these sorts of evil as well. Christians are to hate evil actions and words, just as God does. They are to assemble themselves with other fellow believers, those who fear the Lord. Christians who associate with others of like-mind will exhort each other and live holy.

4) *He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.*

When a faithful Christian takes an oath, it must be honored even if it requires suffering. When we are persecuted for standing by the Word of God, we will be rewarded at Christ's judgment seat.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil." (1 Peter 3:14-17)

5) *He does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.*

Christians should deal fairly at all times, helping the needy and the poor without reservation. Christians are never to take advantage of others or act in greediness, but give to others freely and sincerely.

6) *He who does these things shall never be moved.*

God's promise for the righteous, i.e. the overcomers, will not be awarded in this age, but in the age to come. Christians who overcome will dwell with the Lord in the kingdom of heaven as their sure foundation.

Example 21) Book of Proverbs

King Solomon, who was granted the gift of wisdom from God, wrote many of the **Proverbs**, all of **Ecclesiastes** and **Song of Solomon**. Shortly after Solomon became king of Israel, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “*Ask! What shall I give you?*” (**1 Kings 3:5**). Solomon, stressing his relative youth and inexperience by referring to himself as “a little child” in the affairs of government, asked for wisdom and understanding to judge his people. The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request and not only granted him wisdom and knowledge, but also blessed him with great wealth and honor. King Solomon taught the wisdom of God in his Proverbs. Possessing God's wisdom, he taught the way to a righteous lifestyle with God. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, recorded his wisdom for our benefit that we might receive instruction and understanding in God's righteousness—a pathway that leads to rewards in the coming kingdom. The wisdom and understanding which Solomon possessed as he ruled in the kingdom of Israel has its connection with the “tree of life.” In **Proverbs 3:13-18**, Solomon associated wisdom and understanding with the “tree of life.”

Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold.

She is more precious than gold. She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

Length of days is in her right hand. In her left hand riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her.

The fruit of the tree of life originally placed in the Garden of Eden would have provided wisdom and understanding for Adam to rule. It will provide Christians in the Millennium the necessary wisdom and understanding to rule in the kingdom as well. Christians allowed to partake of the tree of life will in that day be equipped to rule over the earth as co-heirs with Christ. It is reserved for the overcomers in the age to come.

The Book of **Proverbs** exhorts believers to feed on God's wisdom through His Word for the preparation of their soul salvation. Making the proper preparations will qualify believers to be partakers in Christ's coming kingdom and to partake of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. The Book of **Proverbs** deals with the message of acquiring wisdom and understanding for the purpose of being equipped to carry on the Lord's business as ministers during His absence in this age. If we overcome, we will have access to wisdom and understanding from the partaking of the tree of life in the age to come.

The Value of Wisdom

My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding;

Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;

Then you will understand the fear of the Lord And find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;

He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints.

Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path. (Proverbs 2:1-9)

If we are passionate about seeking God's Word, He will be faithful to give wisdom and knowledge, allowing us to grow and be transformed like Him. God's Word is life, life in the Millennium. God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers for the purpose of imparting truth and understanding. The Holy Spirit is comprised of seven Spirits whom God brought forth since the beginning, before the ages were formed. These Spirits are part of His Spirit whom He sent out to all the earth to give to all believers who seek Him --- for the purpose of guiding the way to His future kingdom. A clear picture is revealed by the Spirit of Wisdom:

"The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old, I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world.

When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,

When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;

And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men. Now therefore, listen to me, my children, For blessed are those who keep my ways.

Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the

posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the Lord; But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:22-36)

The importance of gaining wisdom through God's Word is a matter of saving or losing one's soul-life in the age to come. From the beginning, the Lord Jesus Christ together with the Holy Spirit took part in God's creation. **Isaiah 11:2** reveals the seven characteristics of the Holy Spirit:

*The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him (His Deity),
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

And in **Revelation 5:6**, Christ is described as the Lamb, possessing the seven Spirits of God:

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

God *commands* Christians to attain His wisdom. When one possesses the fear of the Lord, he is motivated to understand and please Him, desiring to be partakers with Him in the age to come.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life
will be added to you. (Proverbs 8:10, 11)*

The wisdom of God is the central theme of the Book of **Proverbs**. Solomon, in all his wisdom, knew how extremely important it was to understand God's Word and to walk in His ways. And he knew that fear and reverence for the Lord was the motivating factor for gaining His wisdom. The Book of **Proverbs** provides detailed instructions to guide us in our Christian walk. It teaches believers the tools needed to overcome.

An example of an overcomer is pictured in the "virtuous wife" in

Proverbs 31:10. The virtuous wife is representative of the bride of Christ. Her acts of goodness, honesty and strength *all the days of her life* to her Husband and her household brings her praise and honor and qualifies her in the gates (of the Kingdom). This type of individual will be hard to find at the end of this dispensation. It is a question that is stated at the beginning of **Proverbs 31:10**:

“Who can find a virtuous wife?”

We find a similar question addressed in **Luke 18:8** when Jesus says:

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find [the] faith on the earth?”

The Virtuous Wife

*Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack
of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands.
She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar.*

*She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her
household, And a portion for her maidservants. She considers a
field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.*

*She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. She
perceives that her merchandise is good, And her lamp does not go
out by night.*

*She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the
spindle. She extends her hand to the poor. Yes, she reaches out her
hands to the needy.*

*She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household
is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; Her
clothing is fine linen and purple.*

Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders

of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household. And does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all."

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Her worth is far above rubies refers to faithful works that are found to be without blemish. Those found worthy from previous decisions and determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ will be valued far above precious stones (**1 Corinthians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:7**).

She does him good and not evil all the days of her life refers to being faithfully obedient to the Lord until the end; a lifelong process of putting to death the flesh and living according to the Spirit.

She also rises when it is yet night, and provides food for her household.

This is similar to **Matthew 24:45-47**:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

As wise and faithful servants of Christ, the food that we are to give to His household (the family of believers) is the meat of the Word, the Word of

the kingdom. When Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He left us with the Holy Spirit and His Word, commanding us to “do business” until He returns.

She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard.

The “vineyard” is the kingdom. Jesus Christ is the vine and the Father is the vinedresser. The field is the world. As branches, we are to bear fruit in the world for the building of the kingdom.

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit he takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit...I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me, you can do nothing. (John 15:2-5).

Just as Christ purchased us with His blood to redeem us and offer us a part in His future kingdom, we also must put to death the flesh daily and purchase oil [wisdom from the Holy Spirit]. We must bear fruit through the Spirit of Christ in order to build the kingdom and be found worthy as the bride.

She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. By implication, the word “gird” means with intensity, and is subject to a passionate determination to fulfill. Therefore, by remaining constant and strong in the Word of God, the overcomer is strengthened and cannot be brought down. The overcomer’s merchandise is the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Her lamp (spirit) not only contains the oil from the Holy Spirit, but is completely filled (strong meat of the Word) that qualifies her at the Judgment seat of Christ.

She extends her hands to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. Usually the word “poor,” such as in **Matthew 5:5**, refers to the poor or needy in spirit, i.e. the humble, those hungry for the Word. They are humble to receive God’s Word, to mature and to submit to His commandments. To these individuals we are to reach out and give assistance by the ministering of the Word of the kingdom and to their common needs.

Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates,

when he sits among the elders of the land. In **Revelation 19:8**, we see that the fine linen of the bride of Christ is the “righteous acts of the saints.” An example of being properly clothed is pictured in **Ruth 3:3** as Ruth had to put on her best wedding garment [righteous acts] to prepare herself to meet her bridegroom. The virtuous wife prepares herself knowing that her husband is known in the gates of the kingdom. He sits on the throne among the elders (angels) of the kingdom.

Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come.

We are to put on the proper clothing (attributes of strength and honor) under the leadership of the Holy Spirit *now* so that we can possess a glorified body *then*. In this, we shall rejoice in the age to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household. And does not eat the bread of idleness. An overcomer is able to control the tongue through the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking in kindness and in wisdom, preparing to be priest-king in the age to come. She continually exhorts other believers who are like-minded and she remains steadfast in the faith, never wavering.

Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: “Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.”

At the judgment seat of Christ, the overcomers will be exalted; and some more than others, as some will have excelled in works as well as in rewards.

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates. The overcomer’s focus is not on the things of this world, but on the fear of the Lord. The reward to be presented at the Judgment seat of Christ will commensurate with the measure of one’s fruit. The overcomer’s works will be found to praise, honor and glory in the gates of the kingdom!

In summary, the Book of **Proverbs** *commands* believers to obtain wisdom through God’s Word, producing the fear of the Lord. When we have the fear of the Lord, we understand that Christ will judge our soul-life in that future Day.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul. (Proverbs 3:21, 22)

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life ,To turn one away from the snares of death. (Proverbs 14:26, 27)

The fear of the Lord prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. The hope of the righteous will be gladness, But the expectation of the wicked will perish.

The way of the Lord is strength for the upright, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity. (Proverbs 10:27-29)

We must seek God's Word daily and allow the fruit of the Spirit to produce good works through us. We must endure until the end, for our reward awaits.

Example 22) Book of Ecclesiastes

The Book of **Ecclesiastes** was written at a time during Solomon's recommitment to the living God and is a guide for believers who fall into the perils of this present life. Solomon continues his instruction from the Book of **Proverbs** of attaining the fear of the Lord and concludes with the following,

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Why should we fear and obey God? The answer is because God will judge everyone -- the righteous and the wicked (faithful and carnal) Christians. On the Day of the Lord, Christ will call forth all believers to account for their works, whether good or bad. Therefore, the admonition to fear God and the expectation of divine judgment are the two great themes that conclude this Book.

The Book of **Ecclesiastes** instructs believers to live for the Lord, for only then can we find hope and peace. The pleasures in life that come from the world and the flesh are all vanity. It is a way of keeping our focus away from the One and Only True God. Satan diverts our attention by having us focus on ambition, lustful pleasures of the world, self, worldly desires and possessions which provide no permanent joy or satisfaction. Those who overcome these temptations by faith in God will experience true joy and peace -- for their hope is in the age to come.

Every believer will experience blessings and suffering. God allows it for good, to prepare us for the saving of our soul. If a believer remains faithful during trials, he will have God's protection and guidance. But an unfaithful believer does not trust in the Lord to protect and guide him when he encounters suffering and tribulation.

To fear God, the central theme of the Book of **Ecclesiastes**, means to have reverence, fear, awe and wonder in response to His glory. It means to respond to Him in faith and obedience, and to be in *fear* (Greek word, "*phobos*" which means "terror"), for all will be judged one day in His presence.

I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it.

God does it, that men should fear before Him. That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past. (Ecclesiastes 3:14, 15)

SECTION 3 — SONG OF SOLOMON TO MALACHI

Example 23) Song of Solomon

The **Song of Solomon** is a love story about a young girl, a type of the bride of Christ, and King Solomon, a type of Christ. This story expresses the love between a bride and bridegroom and their intimate relationship, followed by an exhortation for the bride to remain holy and pure before marriage.

The **Song of Solomon** reveals the purpose as to why God created man and woman for marriage --- pointing to the relationship between God and Israel and Christ and the Church. Redeemed man involves both Israel and the Church in the same regard --- for participation in the future Messianic Kingdom. In this respect, the **Song of Solomon** bears similarities to the Book of **Esther** for Israel, and the Book of **Ruth** for the Church. Esther, a Jewish girl who became the bride of the King of Israel, is a type of Israel. In the Book of **Ruth**, Boaz who is a type of Christ, redeems Ruth, a type of the Church, and takes her for his bride just as Christ will redeem the faithful ones from the Church and take them for His bride.

This is why the **Song of Solomon** means the "loveliest of songs." The marriage relationship between God the Father and Israel, and Christ and the Church will reflect the loveliest relationship ever to be. God created man in His image; the woman made from the side of man's rib. In like manner, Christ's rib was speared at Calvary to form the Church as part of His body. This is symbolic of the marriage relationship between the Lord and His bride in the future Millennial kingdom.

The song opens with a brief description of the Shulamite. The Shulamite compares her dark skin acquired from the long hours working in the vineyards with the lighter complexion of the city maidens. But her groom assures her that she is "lovely," referring to the beauty of true worship to the living God (**Psalms 33:1; 147:1**). God sees the inward appearance of a Christian and not the outward appearance to qualify to be the bride for His Son.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

On the Day of the Lord, the bride of Christ will have made herself ready by washing herself (confession of sin), anointing herself (spiritual growth unto maturity), and putting on the wedding garment (working daily to live righteously by faith through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and awaiting His return).

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to

her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous act of the saints. (Revelation 19:7, 8)

In **Song of Solomon** chapter **two**, the Man introduces Himself as, *I am the rose of Sharon, And the lily of the valleys*. In comparing Scripture with Scripture, we find “the rose” of “Sharon” to be the future glory of Zion (the glory of the Lord), mentioned in **Isaiah 35:1, 2**:

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.

In **Matthew 6:28, 29**, a companion Scripture of the “the lily” of the valleys is revealed:

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil or spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one [bride of Christ] of these.

The hope of the faithful Christian is to experience the love and glory of the Lord in His kingdom and to be chosen as His bride. In **Song of Solomon 2:2**, we find that among Solomon’s 700 wives and 300 concubines, only one is special and set apart among His family. Only one was his special love among all.

Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

The Word makes perfectly clear that only those within the family of God who abide in Him will be chosen as His bride. In the parable of the wedding feast (**Matthew 22:14**), Christ says, *For many are called, but few are chosen* (called out).

Example 24) Isaiah

The remaining 16 Books of the Old Testament were written from 15 prophets who ministered God's word to the nation of Israel. God gave them the gift of prophecy and called them to be His messengers to the Jewish people. They were called to minister and warn them of a future consequence if they did not obey the Lord.

Isaiah began to prophesy around 740 B.C. and ended his mission in 681 B.C. Isaiah had a two-fold message: he prophesied on Christ's first coming (**Isaiah 9:1-7; 42; 49; 53**), and His second coming (**Isaiah 11; 56; 61; 63; 65**). At the time when he began his service to God, the entire nation of Israel was heading down a path of sin and idolatry. Isaiah had been called by God to confront and warn them of their sins. As punishment, God had placed Israel in the hands of Babylon. Israel followed their gods and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Isaiah's teachings of repent and judgment was not what the Jewish people wanted to hear, and his preaching made him very unpopular. Nonetheless, Isaiah continued to stand up for the truth even when he was faced with opposition.

In the year that King Uzziah died in 740 B.C., Isaiah had an extraordinary vision of the throne of God with His angels. It was then that God Himself called Isaiah to be a prophet and messenger to the people of Israel (**Isaiah 6**). And this is what God instructed Isaiah to do:

And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy,

And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." (Isaiah 6:9, 10)

Isaiah's preaching to the religious and arrogant people of Israel were a challenging call, for the more he would preach to them, the less responsive the people would be. Isaiah's perseverance in his preaching would cause them to keep hearing his message but only make their ears heavy, for their hearts were hardened. Only the humble would understand the Lord's message. Isaiah's response was "Lord, how long?" How long would the

people of Israel be rebellious to God and unresponsive to the truth? And God answers him, "*Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant...But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming*" (**Isaiah 6:11a, 13**); a time of the end.

Isaiah prophesied on the fall of Jerusalem, which occurred in 586 B.C. He prophesied on the return of the Jews to their land, which occurred in 538 B.C. Yet while he warned the wicked of their tragic fate, he also encouraged those who repented to place their hope in God for their future inheritance. However, because of their continued disobedience, Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be separated from God until the end of the age, until they repent and their Redeemer returns (**Isaiah 59**).

All of the prophecies told by Isaiah and the other prophets have all come to pass, all but the following have yet to take place: the rapture of the Church, the seven year Tribulation and the second coming of Christ Jesus. After the Church is raptured, God will once again deal with Israel unto repentance during the seven year Tribulation. Isaiah presented a detailed description of the impending judgment that will fall on the Jewish people and on the entire earth during the Great Tribulation (**Isaiah 24; 29, 34**). Though God chastens His sinful people, He also preserves a remnant because He is faithful to keep His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (**Isaiah 10:20; 11; 31:4; 52; 62**).

Isaiah encouraged the people of Israel to repent and keep away from greed, idolatry and the sin of unbelief. The same admonition was relayed to Christians. Isaiah prophesied that out of the Gentiles, a remnant (from the Church and Tribulation saints) would join Israel's remnant to become servants of the Lord (**Isaiah 56**). Isaiah exhorted every believer to abide in the Lord, which is most important in this age for the future salvation of their soul.

An Invitation to Abundant Life

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat.

*Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.
Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?*

Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David.

Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people.

Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you, shall run to you, Because of the Lord your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you."

Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower, And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;

It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the Lord for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
(Isaiah 55:1-13)

Example 25) Jeremiah

Jeremiah served God as a prophet for over forty years and in all this time the people did not listen to his warnings. He suffered greatly for preaching the Word of God, being put into prison, thrown into a dungeon, mocked and rejected by his family, friends, false priests and kings. Jeremiah was alone in his service to get the people to repent and follow God. Though most of what he prophesied came to pass, the people continued to ignore the warnings.

Does this still hold true today? In **John 3:19**, Christ said that people would rather believe a lie than believe the Truth. Many Christians are comfortable remaining ignorant, as they are so deep into the affairs of this world, a world ruled under Satan. Many would rather follow false teachers who are ear ticklers, as they only want to hear what is pleasing to their ears. Their deeds are merely attempts to conceal a heart in rebellion against God. The ultimate reason people do not come to the light is that they do not want to. In **Revelation 3:17**, the Lord Jesus Christ reveals the condition of the Church as a whole at the near close of this age — *“wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.”*

But Jeremiah did not give up. Though he was mocked, humiliated, and persecuted, he remained faithfully obedient to God. Jeremiah could have been swayed by these people's attacks to turn away from the Truth, but he remained faithful to God, for he had a deep understanding of His Word. Once a believer has been enlightened with the Truth, how can he go back to believing the lie? Those who have no foundation in God's Word will be the first ones to fall back. We see this in the Parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13:20**,

“But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word (Word of the kingdom), immediately he stumbles.”

In light of his persecutions and tribulations, Jeremiah could be compared to what Job suffered. Jeremiah, in his distress, thought it would have

been better to die at birth than to endure the hardships of persecution (**Jeremiah 20:14; Job 3**). But with God's strength, Jeremiah prevailed and for the reason that "*His word was in my heart like a burning fire*" (**Jeremiah 20:9**). Despite his anguish, Jeremiah fulfilled his ministry of proclaiming God's judgment to His people for their unfaithfulness and disobedience.

The Book of **Jeremiah** is about prophecy and concerns God's future judgment on Israel, during the Tribulation. In **Jeremiah 4:1-4**, God made a plea to the nation of Israel to repent and return to the Lord, for they were a disobedient people, following other gods and doing works of wickedness in the sight of the Lord. In **Jeremiah 4:5-31**, Jeremiah prophesied on God's judgment upon His people because of their continued transgressions. This judgment relates to the future Tribulation and what God will do to the Jews and to their city in order to bring them to repentance. The devastation will be as the Flood during Noah's day, and far worse than the Holocaust that occurred during this dispensation. Jeremiah prophesied on Christ's second coming (**Jeremiah 23:1-8**); on Israel's seventy years of desolations (excluding the Church period) until Christ's return (**Jeremiah 25:1-14; 29:10**); and the restoration of Israel on the coming Day of the Lord (**Jeremiah 30, 31**).

Jeremiah serves to this day as an example of a faithful ambassador of God, one faithful unto the end despite many hardships. His life of service to the Lord was a success because he overcame all obstacles to the saving of his soul.

In the Book of **Lamentations**, Jeremiah expresses his grief over the fall of Jerusalem due to the nation's sinfulness. The people of Israel had chosen to reject God. Yet even in this time of suffering there was hope. The Lord would not discipline His people forever; He would eventually restore those who waited on Him. To this day, Israel's position has not changed since their last fall in 70 A.D. According to the Lord, the nation ceases to exist as a whole, as a theocracy. This period is considered "*the times of the Gentiles.*" At the end of this dispensation, the Jews who have waited upon the Lord will finally be restored to their land and then Israel will exist as a nation again within a theocracy — forever.

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. (Lamentations 3:25, 26)

Example 26) Ezekiel

Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was given more visions from God than any other prophet — the Apostle John being next in line. The word “vision” is derived from the Hebrew word “to see.” Ezekiel witnessed a vision of God in **Ezekiel 1:26-28**, a similar picture of how Daniel saw Him in **Daniel 10:4-6** and John's eyewitness in **Revelation 1:13-16; 4:2, 3; 19:12**.

Ezekiel perceived with his own eyes, prophesied and warned the people of Israel concerning the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. After the city was destroyed, Ezekiel gave the people hope, prophesying that the Lord would gather the children of Israel among the nations, bring them back into their own land and that one kingdom shall arise in the future with one King, Christ Jesus, ruling over them.

But before this would happen, Ezekiel gave warnings of the impending judgment that would fall upon Israel because of their continued disobedience and wickedness. God would bring extreme judgment on them because they continued throughout their generations to defile and desecrate themselves by pagan worship and by their unfaithfulness, in which they murdered their prophets and sacrificed their children to the god, Baal.

Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire? (Ezekiel 16:20, 21)

Ezekiel presents detailed information concerning Jerusalem's wickedness and harlotry against God (**Ezekiel 16:15-34**). Israel had committed adultery with the Gentile nations, had built themselves up in fame and fortune, and fell completely away from the Lord. During the future Tribulation, the Lord will cause the Gentile nations, Jerusalem's lovers

(Ezekiel 16:35), to turn against the nation of Israel and to violently abuse and kill them. Two-thirds of the Israelites will be destroyed because of their wickedness, but God will leave a remnant. This account will occur during the Great Tribulation at the end of this age. **(Zechariah 13:8, 9)**

Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: “Indeed I, even I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.

Then your altars shall be desolate, your incense altars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the corpses of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars.

In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate, so that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, your idols may be broken and made to cease, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. The slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

*Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered throughout the countries. Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them.” **(Ezekiel 6:2-10)***

In order to effect repentance, God will execute the severest form of judgment on Israel, such as never before. The Great Tribulation will cause Israel to sincerely repent and to cry to God for help. The same distressful wailing that was heard in the camp of Israel in Babylon and during the days of the Assyrian in Egypt will be heard again during the days of the future Assyrian Antichrist. **(Micah 5:5, 6)** When they look upon Jesus, it will cause Israel’s eyes to see the evil they have done, to believe in Him and to mourn. **(Zechariah 12:10-14)** Because of God’s grace and mercy, He will deliver the nation of Israel from the Gentile nations and restore

them back to their land (**Ezekiel 11:14; 20:33; 36:8-38; 37:14-28; 39:21**). At the end of the Great Tribulation, God will destroy Israel's bordering enemies and most of the Gentile nations as they make war against the Lord and the Jewish people (**Ezekiel 25-32, 35**).

God gave Ezekiel the vision of the dry bones, the whole house of Israel, being raised to life and placed in their own land. To see flesh and bones come to life, a multitude raised simultaneously and transported to their land, would have been an incredible sight! This vision depicts God's power and promise to all, Israel and the Church, that He will revive and resurrect the dead.

*And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord."'" (**Ezekiel 37:3-6**)*

Ezekiel is given a detailed vision of the New Jerusalem that will be built by Christ during the Millennium on earth. Ezekiel's vision of a restored temple gave hope to the people of Israel since the last temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. But Ezekiel spoke of a more glorious temple than the last one, because God's glorious presence will give the future temple light and He shall dwell there amongst His people, Israel (**Ezekiel 43:7**). As a hopeful reminder, God gave a thorough description of the future New Jerusalem with specific dimensions, number of rooms, courts and detailed designs of God's temple where His people Israel will reside.

Like the other prophets, Ezekiel faced strong opposition and hardship from the people of Israel during his ministry. Yet he remained faithful to the Lord and abided by all of God's commandments. Ezekiel's ministry was quite different from the other prophets in that he displayed unusual demonstrations to the people of Israel in order to get their attention and make them understand. These demonstrations were a way in which Ezekiel could illustrate Israel's disobedience, followed by their punishment and restoration. God asked Ezekiel to perform some of these strange actions such as lying on his left side for 390 days and his right side

for 40 days to demonstrate the length of Babylon's siege corresponding to the number of years Israel had sinned against God — 390 years for Israel and 40 days for Judah. This demonstration portrayed the punishment of Gentile rule inflicted upon the nation of Israel over a 430-year period extending from 597 BC to approximately 167 BC. (**Ezekiel 4:1-8**).

God also took the death of Ezekiel's wife as a sign of the overwhelming sadness the nation would feel when the city of Jerusalem and the temple is destroyed. God commanded Ezekiel not to mourn for the death of his wife as an illustration of God's pain over the death of His wife, Israel, and His inability to mourn because the nation deserved the punishment of destruction for their wickedness and disobedience (**Ezekiel 24:15**).

When obedience to God demanded unusual actions, the people's curiosity about the reasons for the behavior was enhanced. Therefore, Ezekiel was able to witness and get the people to pay attention to his prophecies. But how difficult it must have been for his inability to mourn for his wife!

Ezekiel's sacrifices and devotion to God were clearly made apparent. While our actions may not be as dramatic as his, we can relate to him being portrayed as an "outcast" in the world and as a "strange person." Obedience to the will of God can be challenging in any generation, because the popularity of the world is so wicked and ready to persecute the few righteous, the unpopular.

The prophet Ezekiel is one we can fall back on for support when we feel alone in our ministry to others. Like Ezekiel, we should not worry about how we look to others, but only to God, for we owe our obedience to Him. Ezekiel's vision of the future New Jerusalem *on earth* (not to be mistaken for the New Jerusalem in heaven) included the entire temple complex consisting of the Sanctuary or Most Holy Place of the Lord and the holy district of the priests within the center of the city. The temple complex is separate from the rest of the city. The entire city is surrounded by a wall and twelve gates of the city, naming the twelve tribes of Israel. The borders and divisions of the land within the city are described in detail, dividing the inheritance between the twelve tribes of Israel. And within the center of the city dwells the Lord Jesus Christ amongst them -- forever.

All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE. (Ezekiel 48:35)

Example 27) Daniel

... the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses (Daniel 5:21b).

God placed Daniel in the midst of pagan rulers in Babylon so that His purpose would be done, so that the kings of Babylon would know that God's kingdom will prevail over all earthly kingdoms.

The Book of **Daniel** is a prophecy of future events of the Tribulation, events that involve the nation of Israel and Gentile world power centered in Babylon under the rule of the Antichrist. During Daniel's time, God placed the nation of Israel into the hands of Babylon because of their disobedience. In 605 B.C., the Assyrian Empire had been defeated by the king of Babylon. Judah, the surviving remnant of the nation of Israel, had been under Assyrian domination at that time, but was forced out of their land to Babylon.

Because of Israel's disobedience, God's chosen people had been conquered and dispersed by a mighty empire that did not acknowledge God. History will continue in this pattern until Israel repents, then God will judge all Gentile nations, restore Israel to their land and establish His Millennial kingdom. The time will come when God will gather His chosen people to Himself. The message that Daniel gave to the people of Israel and to the kings of Babylon was that God of Israel is sovereign and that heaven rules above them all.

The Book of **Daniel** is a Book of prophecy surrounding the "*latter days*" which means in Hebrew "end, end time, last end or latter end." It begins in Daniel's day and ends with the future Tribulation. It is evident that the prophecies and visions of Daniel were fulfilled and will be fulfilled at the exact time that God wills, demonstrating yet again --- the Most High God rules.

The Four Great Beasts—

In **Daniel 2**, God reveals King Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel. Daniel was bold to minister God's power to the king. When asked if he was able to interpret the dream, Daniel answered,

The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. (Daniel 2:27, 28)

As previously stated, the "latter days" is an expression used frequently of the end times, referring to the Tribulation and subsequently when God will establish His Messianic kingdom, an expression that is the central subject of the Book of **Daniel** and which corresponds to the Book of **Revelation**.

Daniel proceeds to tell the king the interpretation of the dream, which was a testimony of what God will do in the future. The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was seen standing in Babylon before the king. Therefore, *one kingdom is in view*, as all four parts of the image was Babylon throughout. These four parts represent four world empires that will arise in the latter times, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. and ending with the future Antichrist, each one more powerful than the one before. After these four Babylonian kingdoms have run their course, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands (meaning supernatural activity; a mighty angel: **Revelation 18:21**) was seen smashing the great image on the feet and grinding it to powder (in the latter days, the image will reflect the Antichrist: **Revelation 13:14**). The powder is then blown away as chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the stone grew until it filled the whole earth. This is a description of the smiting of Gentile world power and Antichrist by Christ, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom which fills the entire earth (**Isaiah 1:9**).

After Daniel interpreted the dream, the king promoted Daniel and his three Jewish friends. Then, King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold in Babylon, nearly a 100 feet high, and commanded all peoples, nations and tongues to worship the image. Whoever did not fall down and worship would be cast into a burning fiery furnace. This prophecy will find its fulfillment during the last half of the Tribulation, when the false prophet

will make an image of the Antichrist and will command all to worship the image of the beast in Babylon or be killed (**Revelation 13:14, 15**).

The Book of **Daniel** coincides with the Book of **Revelation** beginning with chapter **seventeen** regarding the condition of the Jews and the Gentile nations during the last half of the Tribulation period. During this time, Israel and the Gentile nations will be mingled together in acts of idolatry, greed, and wickedness under the rule of the Antichrist. The Jews will be committing spiritual adultery with Babylon, attempting to exist apart from God and will be reckoned among the nations. Without shame, they will openly worship and idolize other gods. Daniel, as well as the other prophets, predicted Israel's disobedience and harlotry through forbidden national relationships with the Gentile nations under the rule of the Antichrist. In **Revelation 17:5**, Israel is pictured having *on her forehead a name written, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."* In **Jeremiah 3:1** and **3:3**, we have a companion Scripture which reads, *"But you have played the harlot with many lovers....You have had a harlot's forehead; you refuse to be ashamed."*

The Gentile nations existed because of the Jewish people's disobedience. God removed the Jewish people from their land and scattered them as punishment for their sins since the building of the tower of Babel. During this time, God gave the scepter over to the Gentile nations. And, though later, the city of Babylon was destroyed by Media-Persia, the spirit of Babylon remained throughout the centuries and spread to all peoples, nations and tongues. This resulted in a corrupt and evil world where greed, selfishness, gluttony, wickedness, and idolatry were practiced. And once again as before, God will give Israel into the hands of modern rebuilt Babylon and the Gentile nations. In the future, because of their harlotry and wickedness, God will use Babylon to bring destruction to Israel until they have been completely shattered. Then, when they repent, He will save them and destroy Babylon and Gentile domination.

In **Ezekiel 23:28-31**, God punishes Israel for reckoning with the Gentile nations:

For thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will deliver you into the hand of those you hate, into the hand of those from whom you alienated

yourself. They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, and leave you naked and bare.

The nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotry. I will do these things to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols. You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will put her cup (of wrath and desolation) in your hand."

A companion Scripture is revealed in **Revelation 17:16**,

And the ten horns (nations) which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot (Israel), make her desolate, and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (The Tribulation will be the "time of Jacob's trouble," the most horrific time imaginable for the Jewish people — far worse than World War II.)

Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, were promoted over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but refused to worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Therefore, the Chaldeans maliciously accused them of disobeying the king and suggested they be burned in the fiery furnace. The king was furious and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than usual and bind the three Jewish men. But not a hair on their head was burned, as God had protected them. The king was astonished to see that there were four men loose in the fire unharmed, the fourth being Jesus Christ.

"Look!" He answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Daniel 3:25)

This account will once again occur during the last half of the Tribulation. The Jewish people will fall into the rule and persecution of the Antichrist. Those who refuse to worship the image of the Antichrist and receive the mark of the beast will be saved into the millennial kingdom. Though many will be martyred for their faith in Christ, they will be resurrected at His second coming. Those who do worship the image will face the wrath of God. In **Revelation 13:3, 4**, it is apparent that most of God's people will be deceived and will follow the Antichrist.

In **Daniel 4**, Nebuchadnezzar's second dream was interpreted by Daniel through divine revelation. Nebuchadnezzar and his empire, Babylon, were symbolized by a great tree which was cut down for seven years (a "tree" in Scripture is used to symbolize a national power). But God allowed the stump and the roots of the tree to remain. This is a description of Nebuchadnezzar's rule to be taken away for seven years because of his failure to recognize that *"the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses."* The moment the king proclaimed that Babylon was great and that he had mighty power and royalty, he was stripped of his power, possessions and honor. But God allowed the kingdom to remain under the king's power, once he repented and acknowledged that God was the eternal Sovereign forever. Yet, this part of the prophecy will find its fulfillment when Christ returns, when Gentile world power (Babylon as the center) ruled by the Antichrist is put down, and all who remain will acknowledge and worship Him. God has and will create and destroy kingdoms and distribute them to whom he wills so that His plans and purposes are fulfilled.

Belshazzar, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, had a prideful heart and had failed to recognize the sovereignty of God. Therefore, God warned him by writing on the palace walls the words that described his fall. That very night, after Daniel had interpreted God's writing on the wall, Belshazzar was slain.

Darius the Mede was Belshazzar's successor to the throne of Babylon. He was planning to set Daniel above the governors of his kingdom, so the governors sought maliciously to get Daniel to break the king's law when it conflicted with the law of God. When Daniel knelt down to pray, the governors went before the king and accused Daniel of breaking the king's law and requested that he be cast into the den of lions. But God protected Daniel in the den and no harm came to him. When Darius released him from the den, Daniel blessed the king for believing in God. Darius honored God and commanded the evil governors and their families to be cast into the den of lions. And Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and his successor, Cyrus. In the antitype, God will protect a remnant of Israel during the Great Tribulation and will slay the evil leaders of the world, demonstrating yet again that God rules in the kingdom of men.

While Daniel served Belshazzar, God gave him visions of four beasts, which represent four Gentile kingdoms (**Daniel 7**). These kingdoms arise out of the works of Satan. The first represents Babylon (modern day Iraq), the second is Media-Persia (modern day Iran), the third represents Greece and the fourth will be a kingdom headed by Satan who gives power to the Antichrist. Scripture outlines the structure of the governments of the earth in the following fashion: God rules over all, Satan and his fallen angels rules under God, and man rules under Satan and his angels. Satan has occupied the position as incumbent ruler over the earth but only under the authority of God. Therefore, these four earthly kingdoms are ruled by man under Satan.

The fourth kingdom will be exceedingly powerful and dreadful and will rule over all the Gentile nations as one world kingdom. It will be headed by Satan, who will give power to his son, Antichrist. Antichrist will speak against God and will display himself as the Most High. He shall order the Jews to be killed who do not worship him and his image. He will order them to receive his mark on their hand or forehead in order for them to buy or sell. He will intend to change the entire economic and governmental structure of the world. He will defile the Holy Sanctuary with his presence and cause the Holy Spirit to depart from it.

Then the Glory of the Lord departed... (Ezekiel 10:18).

The Spirit of the Lord departed from the holy temple in Israel because of all the abominations that Israel allowed. The house of Israel will go into captivity, be scattered among the Gentile nations and be given into their hands (**Ezekiel 12:11-15**).

King Antiochus IV, a type of the Antichrist, polluted the altar and committed an abomination of desolation, and he also erected an image of Zeus for all to worship. Jesus said a similar thing would happen just prior to His return (**Matthew 24:15**). The holy temple will once again be defiled by the Antichrist in the latter days causing the Holy Spirit and the Levitical sacrifices to depart from it (**2 Thessalonians 2:3-8; Daniel 8:11-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11**). And many of the Jews will cooperate with the Antichrist and forsake the holy covenant.

So he (Antichrist) shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him,

and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. (Daniel 11:30-32)

Once God brings the Jews to a place of repentance, Christ will then deliver them from the Antichrist and Gentile nations. Gentile world power will be brought down. Then, He will establish His kingdom and it shall be given to the saints of the Most High, those that overcame and remained faithful to the Lord.

He (Antichrist) shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law.

Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Daniel 7:25-27)

A vision of God seated on His throne was revealed to Daniel, displaying the establishment of His kingdom in the seventh Millennium. Antichrist will be slain and cast into the lake of fire. Christ Jesus will possess the kingdom from God the Father and all peoples, nations and tongues shall serve Him. The people from all nations to include Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece, who survived, will be ruled by the saints until the end of the Millennium. Following the Millennium, Satan will be released for a short time to deceive the nations again and make war with Israel (**Revelation 20:7**).

Daniel was given another vision concerning Antichrist and *the time of the end*. In **Daniel 8**, the vision of the ram is Media-Persia (modern day Iran) and the goat is Greece. Greece will overtake the Babylonian kingdom from Iran and then it will be divided amongst four kingdoms. From one of these kingdoms within the Greco-Babylonian Empire (which then

extended to Syria and even further east to Iran [See map on page 316]), a king shall arise who is the Antichrist, who will be Assyrian. When the sinful actions of the Jewish people have reached its peak with God, His wrath will be dispensed. Satan will give power to the Antichrist who will destroy many Jews. He shall exalt himself as God and will make war against Christ. But he shall not prevail. After this vision, Daniel became emotionally sick.

In 539 B.C., during the reign of Darius, Daniel prayed for the people of Israel and repented for their past sinfulness. Daniel quoted Jeremiah the prophet concerning the seventy years of desolations for Jerusalem (a parallel to Daniel's seventy week prophecy), signifying the Jewish people's continued transgressions. He prayed that God would restore the temple for it was laid in ruins since its destruction in 586 B.C. While he was still praying to God, the angel Gabriel appeared to him to give him the vision of the seventy weeks prophecy, and to tell him that from the beginning of his prayer, God had given the command to rebuild the temple.

The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy (**Daniel 9:24-27**) concerns the timeframe from 444 B.C. until Christ's return, when God will deal with the nation of Israel unto repentance. Israel had departed from the Lord and had fallen into disobedience, harlotry and unfaithfulness. God allotted seventy weeks (one "week" meaning "seven years") which is calculated seventy times seven years or 490 years. The time frame began with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in 444 B.C. God dealt with Israel for 483 years after the command was given and then they were set aside following the crucifixion of their Messiah.

In early 63 A.D., the Word of the kingdom of heaven was no longer offered to Israel but to the Church, to those bearing fruit for the kingdom. The Lord set aside His dealings with the nation of Israel seven years prior to the prophecy, a time to be realized yet future -- the seven year Tribulation. At this time, God will deal with Israel once again, bringing about their repentance as well as their restoration. Then, God will bring an end to Gentile world power which will be centered in Babylon. Then, the kingdoms of this world (One world kingdom, centered in Babylon) will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ (kingdom on earth and in heaven) **Revelation 11:15**; and Israel will finally experience perfect reconciliation with God.

Following Israel's crucifixion of their Messiah, the *people* of "the prince who is to come" (a reference to the Antichrist) destroyed the city and the temple in 70 A.D. *The end of it shall be with a flood* (Hebrew definition of "flood" is "to overwhelm; outrageous"). The end of the war desolations for Israel will be at Christ's second coming, following their repentance, when the seventy weeks (490 years) are fulfilled. At the beginning of the Tribulation, the Antichrist shall arise and confirm a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years; but within three and a half years he will break that covenant and will commit an abomination of desolation against God. Christ will return to finish the transgression and to bring in everlasting righteousness --- to destroy the wicked and restore God's people who will reign with Him in the Millennial kingdom.

In that Day of the Lord, man will rule both from the heavens and the earth. The Church will rule in the heavens with Christ from His throne (**John 14:1-4; 1 Peter 1:4-9; Revelation 2:7; 3:21**) and Israel will rule on earth with Christ reigning from David's throne in Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 37: 24-28; Joel 2:27-32; Luke 1:31-33**). [See page 159-162 for more info on **Daniel's 70 Week Prophecy**]

The dreams and visions of Daniel clearly and accurately not only predict the course of history down to the first century A.D., but is a testimony surrounding future events of the Tribulation. God's special revelation to Daniel of future events led to visions of God and Christ Himself seated on His throne in the kingdom. (**Daniel 7:9; 10:1**)

In **Daniel 10:13**, we see the ever-present battle occurring between God's angels and Satan's angels in the heavens.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

An angel approached Daniel to give him the prophecies concerning Persia and Greece, but said that he was detained in the heavens by the prince of the kingdom of Persia for 21 days. Twenty-one days is the exact time frame that Daniel was mourning to gain understanding from God. Michael, the chief prince, helped the angel and was able to come to Daniel to give him the prophecies. It is clear to see that the prince of Persia, who was in the heavens, was a demon or angel of Satan who was to supervise

the affairs of the earthly king of Persia, inspiring its religious, social and political affairs to works of evil. The purpose of this satanic intervention was to prevent Daniel from hearing more of God's revelation. The angel made mention to Daniel that he must tell him *what is noted in the Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10:21)* and then he must return to fight again with the prince of Persia and afterwards the prince of Greece. This clearly shows that earthly Gentile kingdoms are ruled under Satan and his angels, as we see mentioned here of the demons over the provinces of Persia and Greece.

In **Daniel 10:14**, the angel made clear to Daniel that what he was about to disclose referred to the time of the end:

Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

In the sixth century B.C., Daniel wrote,

Behold three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. (Daniel 11:2, 3)

Daniel chapter **11** begins with the Babylonian kingdom under the rule of Persia, the second beast. Then, the fall of Persia and the rise of Alexander's Empire are in view, which was over two hundred years in the future at the time of Daniel's vision. At this point, part of Daniel's prophecies has been fulfilled, except for the fourth Babylonian kingdom – the rise of the Antichrist, the fourth great beast.

A mighty king of Greece, Alexander the Great, conquered Persia, subduing three kings. Then, after Alexander's death, the Greco-Babylonian kingdom was divided into four kingdoms, to include: Seleucid (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran), Macedonia (and Greece), Ptolemaic (Egypt), and Thrace (Bulgaria and Turkey) [See map on page 316]. Among one of these nations will arise the little horn, who is the future Assyrian Antichrist (**Daniel 7:8; 8:8, 9**), and who will subdue three more kings. Then in **Daniel 11:5**, the angel speaks in detail of these three kings

that will arise and fall (king of the south; king of the north; and raiser of taxes), subdued by the little horn, who is the vile king -- the Antichrist. The conquest of these three kings, along with the previous three other kings of Persia mentioned in **Daniel 11:2** will place the Antichrist as the “*seventh head*,” seen in **Revelation 12:3** and **13:1**.

Daniel 11 depicts Egypt (king of the South) and a nation from the Seleucid, Macedonia or Thrace kingdom (king of the North) going into battle against each other with Israel in the midst. First, Egypt will gain control of Israel, and then the king of the North will conquer them in battle. After this ruler is killed, another who imposes taxes will arise in his place, but only for a short time. Then, the Antichrist will come to power:

And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. (Daniel 11:21)

Daniel 11:21 describes the future Assyrian Antichrist who will become king after the untimely death of his predecessor. His identity will become evident when he arises on the scene, and will be according to Daniel’s predictions:

1. The Antichrist will come to power after the untimely death of his predecessor. (**Daniel 11:20**)
2. He will not be an heir to the throne, “*to whom they will not give the honor of royalty*” but he will “*seize the kingdom by intrigue.*” By flattery, he will appeal to the masses, and the people will give in peaceably. (**Daniel 11:21**)
3. He will be an immorally evil and repulsive man, having fierce features, and who understands sinister schemes. The number of his name will be “666.” (**Daniel 8:23; Revelation 13:18**)
4. The hostilities of the Antichrist against the Jews will occur several times during conflicts with Egypt (**Daniel 11:28-30**).
5. He will take military control of Jerusalem and the temple as recorded in **Daniel 11:31**,

"And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress..."

6. He will cause the daily sacrifices to be taken away from the holy temple (**Daniel 11:31**).
7. He will commit an abomination of desolation (literally means "*the abomination that makes desolate*") in the Holy Temple—he will desecrate the Temple, and show himself to be God (**Daniel 9:27**).
8. Many Jewish people will forsake and do wickedly against the holy covenant, in whom Antichrist will corrupt with flattery (**Daniel 11:32**).
9. He will kill many, many Jews (**Daniel 11:33**).

These are the actions that the ultimate "man of sin" will execute during the future Tribulation. Beginning in **Daniel 11:5**, all of these events are *future*, with the Antichrist arising on the scene in **Daniel 11:21**. He will appear as a man of peace who has the answers for the long going battle in the Middle East; between Israel and its surrounding enemies. This will allow him to make a covenant with many in Israel. For three and one-half years, the Antichrist will continue in his deceitfulness until "*the middle of the week*," when he breaks his covenant with the holy people.

He will have power over the kings of the world through his deceitfulness and riches causing them to acknowledge and worship him. He will have authority over their nations and cause them to divide their land for his gain (**Daniel 11:37-39**), including the Holy Land. He shall enter the Glorious Land, kill many Jews, and continue on to conquer Egypt. He will dwell in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**). He will be controlling, vicious and very arrogant; a self-made god (a son and prince of Satan), and he will speak against God the Father.

Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the wrath has been determined. (Daniel 11:36)

Like the previous Antichrists, this "man of sin" will also desecrate the

temple and set up his image in the city, he will also sit in the Most Holy Place. When this occurs, all in Judea will be told to flee to the mountains. Half of the population will be killed, and unless those days are shortened, no flesh will be saved. But God will place a limit on the Tribulation. Christ will intervene and prevent complete genocide. Antichrist will assemble a great army and gather them outside of Jerusalem, near Mount Zion (the site of the Holy Temple) to make war against Christ and His army (**Daniel 11:45; Revelation 19:19**). Christ will defeat him and his army, and cast him into the lake of fire.

...yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him. (Daniel 11:45b).

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Revelation 19:19, 20)

The Book of Daniel concludes with the *Prophecy of the End Time* in **Daniel 12:1-3**. At the time of the end, Michael, the great prince, shall stand watch over the people of Israel. It will be a time of great tribulation such as never before prior to the return of Christ. The people of Israel who are found written in the Book of the living for the righteous (not the same as the Lamb's Book of life for the spiritually saved), will qualify to enter the Millennial kingdom of Christ. The dead will be resurrected and judged, some to age lasting life (Millennial life) and some to shame and age lasting contempt (counted unworthy to enter Millennial life). Those who are wise and faithfully obedient to His Word will shine in glory as kings-priests in Christ's kingdom. And those who turn others to the way of righteousness will rule and reign in higher positions from the throne of Christ.

"How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" (Daniel 12:6b)

The Great Tribulation will last three and a half years, the last half of the seven year Tribulation. When the people of Israel have been totally

shattered and have cried out to God, then Christ will return and restore them. Then, the end of Man's Day will be.

But Daniel did not understand what the end actually meant. *Many shall be purified, made white and refined* --- these are the ones found worthy to reign with Christ. But the wicked people of God will continue in their wicked ways and not understand why they have been cast out. Only the wise will understand; those who abided in the wisdom and commandments of God.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way, till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days. (Daniel 12:11-13)

The time period from when the daily [Levitical] sacrifices (**Daniel 8:11d; 11:31**) are taken away and the abomination of desolation (Antichrist, the beast, in the Temple) is set up, to the Messianic kingdom, will be 1,260 days or three and one half years plus seventy-five days (The Tribulation is divided into two equal halves of 1260 days). Following the Great Tribulation (1260 days), Christ will return with a rod of iron (**Matthew 24:29-31**). During this time, Christ will deal with Israel first, then with the Gentile nations. Seventy-five days later (**30 days of the 1290 days plus 45 days of the 1335 days**), the faithful ones will enter into the Millennial kingdom of Christ. During the seventy-five days, six of the seven Jewish Feasts will be fulfilled, with the seventh feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, being fulfilled at the opening of the Millennial Kingdom. This is a picture of Israel's restoration and the completion of the redemption of the inheritance. In **Daniel 12:13**, the Lord reassured Daniel of his future inheritance: *But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days. (Daniel 12:13)*

By keeping the prophecy of Daniel in our hearts and minds daily, we are able to remain steadfast, looking fervently to the coming of our Lord, and the hope of arising to our inheritance at the end of the days.

Comparison Chart of Daniel's Visions

1st Dream	4 Beasts	Ram & Goat	70 Weeks	Persia & Greece	North & South	End Time
<u>Daniel 2</u> 4 powers shall arise in the Babylonian kingdom	<u>Daniel 7</u> 4 powers or beasts shall arise from the sea	<u>Daniel 8</u>	<u>Daniel 9:20</u>	<u>Daniel 10:10</u>	<u>Daniel 11:5</u>	<u>Daniel 12</u>
1st power is Babylon --Head of Gold	1st power or beast is Babylon--like a lion					
2nd power is Media-Persia — Chest & Arm is silver	2nd power or beast is Media-Persia — like a bear	Ram w/2 horns is Media-Persia---conquered west, north & south		4th king of Persia was the richest and fought against Greece		
3rd power is Greece--ruled over the earth--Belly & Thighs of Bronze	3rd power or beast is Greece-like a leopard w/4 heads: Seleucid, Egypt, Macedonia, and Thrace	Goat w/horn is Greece--conquered Media-Persia and divided into Seleucid, Egypt, Macedonia and Thrace		Greece defeated Persia then Greece divided into four parts: Seleucid, Egypt, Macedonia and Thrace	Two of the four divisions of Greece: A kingdom of the north and a kingdom of the south will be in constant battle, with Israel in the midst.	
4th power --strong as Iron, will break in pieces and crush all the others. This 4 th kingdom shall be divided, yet will have power over all. Satan will give power to the Assyrian Antichrist, "the man of sin."	4th power or beast is different from all of the others. Most dreadful --strong with iron teeth--breaks in pieces and tramples all. Has 10 horns and a little horn arises from one of the 4 heads, and will subdue the other three.	Among one of these nations arises the "little horn" who is the Antichrist and will subdue three kings. He will persecute the saints, take away the daily sacrifice, sit in the Holy Temple for 3 1/2 years.	"The <i>prince who is to come,</i> " Antichrist, shall make a covenant of peace with Israel for 1 week (7yrs), but after 3 1/2 years he shall take away the daily sacrifices and sit in Temple until the end.		A vile king will take the throne through treachery, conquer Egypt and the Glorious Land, defile the temple, kill many Jews, exalt himself as high as God. He will sit in the Holy Temple, and set up an army against God and Israel.	Michael, the archangel, shall stand watch over Israel during the great tribulation --a time of Jacob's trouble such as never before. Then, Jews shall rise to God's judgment and restoration
God & His kingdom will defeat 4 th power and stand forever	Kingdom of God will be given to the saints	God will destroy the horn and cleanse His temple	Vision of the Glorious Man -- Christ the Savior		Antichrist will come to an end; Christ will defeat him.	Israel shall rise to Millennial life

In the previous comparison chart of Daniel's visions, it is interesting to note that under the vision of the four beasts, each kingdom is identified with an animal. If you compare these animals with the description of the beast from the sea in **Revelation 13:2**, you will notice that the beast who is the Antichrist has the exact form of these types of animals in Daniel's visions.

"Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion."

The beast from the sea (Antichrist) will have power over these Gentile nations. In addition, the beast from the sea has 10 horns (**Revelation 13:1; 17:3**) just like the fourth beast from Daniel's vision. Forty-two months (3 1/2 years) is the duration of the beast's worldwide supremacy and persecution of the Jews in keeping with the prophecy of **Daniel 7:25; 12:7, 11**, a companion to this seen in **Revelation 13:5, 7**.

The first dream was a great image that was made of gold (Babylon or Iraq), silver (Media-Persia or Iran), bronze (Greece) and iron (Assyrian Antichrist) reflecting again Gentile world power headed by the Antichrist, the image of the beast.

Example 28) Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi

The central theme of the prophets **Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah** and **Malachi** is the "*Day of the Lord.*" What does this day signify? The word "day" in Scripture means "a time period." The Day of the Lord is a time period lasting 1000 years that will begin *in the heavens* and surrounds 1) Christ's return, 2) judgment and 3) redemption. When will the Day of the Lord begin and when will it end?

Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp, the pupil of John and he wrote this: "In whatever number of days the world was created, in the same number of thousands of years it will come to its consummation. God on the sixth day finished His work and rested on the seventh. This is a history of the past -- and a prophecy of the future -- "*for the day of the Lord is as a thousand years.*"

The theme of eschatology covers the six days of restoration, which represent six thousand years of work, followed by a one thousandth-year of rest. It is the basic doctrine of the Word of God, beginning with Moses who wrote **Genesis** and following through to the end of the Scriptures. It simply cannot be denied.

But many theologians view the "Day of the Lord" to mean judgment from the Lord throughout *past* history. But if we look in the Book of **Revelation** as well as all the prophets in the Old Testament, we can see that the events clearly prophesy "the Day of the Lord" as strictly being the *future* millennial reign of Christ.

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming...And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the Lord shall be KING over all the earth. In that DAY it shall be---"The LORD is one," and His name one. (Zechariah 14:1, 8, 9)

Theologians view the Lord's Day as something entirely different from the Day of the Lord. They view the Lord's Day as the first day of the week, because this was the day that Jesus rose from the dead. But there is absolutely no difference in the meaning of the Lord's Day and the Day of the Lord. Strong's #2960 provides a definition which references both the "Lord's Day," and the "Day of the Lord" to mean "*the day belonging to the Lord.*" They both are one and the same. And because the Book of **Revelation** deals with *future* events that have not yet occurred and because "the Lord's Day" is first and *only* mentioned here in **Revelation** and nowhere else in the New Testament, clearly the reference to the Lord's Day and the Day of the Lord can mean only one thing---the *future* "Day of the Lord." The Lord's Day or Day of the Lord will begin *in heaven* with the removal of the Church and it will begin *on earth* when Christ returns immediately following the Tribulation, bringing Man's Day to a close.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day... (Revelation 1:10)

In the Book of **Revelation**, John recorded events revealed to him not on earth but in heaven. He was removed from his own time and placed in the future Day of the Lord or Lord's Day. John was "*in the Spirit*" meaning that he was no longer in the natural state of man but in the supernatural

state, such as angels. The definition of *spirit* in Strong's #4151 is “breath” and also “superhuman, i.e., an angel or (divine) God.” And while John was present in the Lord’s Day, he wrote down the events he witnessed surrounding the end of this present age.

The writings of the prophets form a complete word-picture of the future Tribulation and the beginning of the Day of the Lord. One cannot help but feel emotion when visualizing the beginning of that Day when Christ returns with a rod of iron. It will be "a day of darkness and gloominess, the sun and moon grow dark, the heaven trembles and the earth quakes from one end to the other!"

For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)

“I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land,” says the Lord...I will cut off man from the face of the land...I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” (Zephaniah 1: 2-4)

The prophets have revealed that the future Tribulation, a time of unparalleled judgment, concerns God’s dealings with the nation of Israel because of their disobedience, unbelief and refusal to repent. The nation’s “sick” condition has continued and will continue after this fashion until the end of Man’s Day. Israel’s sick condition, as well as their cure must be of divine origin. A divine purpose lies behind the nation’s present decreed condition (a blind condition that must remain), a purpose having to do with bringing a nation unto repentance, leaving the nation with no place to turn but to the God of their fathers.

During Zechariah’s day (**Zechariah 1:14, 15**), the Lord set about to chasten His son, Israel, because of disobedience; but, in this case, the Gentile nations stepped in and “*helped forward the affliction.*” God had chastened His son, Israel, in order to bring about correction. And the Gentiles, seeing Israel being chastened, stepped in and sought to intensify the nation’s sufferings. This angered the Lord.

Previous to His chastening Israel, God had said that he was a “*a little displeased*” with Israel; but when the Gentiles stepped in, God said that He was “*very sore displeased*” with the Gentiles. During the Tribulation,

the Gentile nations will interfere once again with God's chastening of Israel. And God will once again be "very sore displeased," with the Gentile nations, bringing about their fall. The same promise set forth in **Genesis 12:3** will apply: "*I will curse him who curses you.*"

Example 29) Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Haggai

The central message proclaimed from these prophets surround the Tribulation and Christ's second coming, but the messages were more focused on Israel's disobedience and restoration. God called Hosea to take for himself a harlot as a picture of Israel's idolatry and unfaithfulness to God. Hosea warned the people of Israel that God would withdraw Himself from them for many years because of their disobedience, but prophesied that in the latter days, they shall return and seek the Lord with fear and trembling.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king (a reference to Christ). They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days. (Hosea 3:4)

With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the Lord, but they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them. They have dealt treacherously with the Lord, for they have begotten pagan children. (Hosea 5:6, 7)

"I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." (Hosea 5:15)

In the latter days, after Israel has been utterly shattered, they will fall on their knees and call on the Lord. God reveals that the restoration of Israel will take place after two days, after two thousand years from the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. On the third day, the beginning of the third one-thousand year period, He will return and restore them. This marks the end of Man's Day and the beginning of Christ's millennial reign.

Come and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning;

He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth. (Hosea 6:1-3)

In **Micah 3**, the prophet reveals the condition of Israel's rulers and how they will horrendously mistreat their people during the end times. Israel's religious leaders will do evil in the sight of the Lord. They will mingle with the Gentile nations in trade and commerce, becoming a partner with Babylon. They will turn away from the Lord and worship other gods in His temple. Therefore, God will completely devastate their city, Jerusalem. At the time of the end, when Israel repents, the Lord Jesus Christ will return, stand upon His holy mountain and will reign with the nation of Israel forever. **Micah 4 and 5** speaks of the Lord's reign and triumph on the third day.

In **Micah 5:2**, we have part of the prophecy fulfilled as Micah announces the two advents of the Lord. Whereas verse **two** speaks of the birth of the Messiah at His first coming, verse **three** through **five** speaks of His second coming after Israel has been shattered and the people are gathered to Him.

The prophet **Nahum** prophesies on the wrath of God against the enemies of His people. God destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria at the time. Today, it is the third largest city in northern Iraq, a part of Mosul, Iraq. Mosul and the surrounding province of Nineveh are a battleground for unresolved conflicts by Kurdish and Sunni Arab leaders over land, and the city has been hit hard with explosives and debris. Nahum's prophecy makes clear that Nineveh will be destroyed again, never to be rebuilt.

Habakkuk's prophecies depict the Lord's Hand in Babylon's destruction of Israel. Babylon is seen as "terrible and dreadful" --- the exact description of the 4th beast in **Daniel 7:7** --- which "*marches through the*

breadth of the earth." Under the rule of the Antichrist, Babylon will not have any respect for authorities or powers other than their own. They will burst through any defense they encounter and commit an offense by dividing the land for gain (**Daniel 11:36-39** provides a similar picture of this occurrence).

They (Babylon) all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings, and princes are scorned by them.

They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his (Antichrist) mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, ascribing this power to his god. (Habakkuk 1:9-11)

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.

Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him, But the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:2-4)

God commanded Habakkuk to write the vision, a prophetic revelation, so that messengers would go and proclaim the divine oracle. In **Habakkuk 2:3** God says, "*The vision is yet for an appointed time*" which refers to the time of the end (a similar answer is given in **Daniel 8:19**). Because of Israel's disobedience, impending judgment will come upon them from the Lord. And the time is near.

O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. (Habakkuk 1:12)

Example 30) Jonah

The prophet Jonah is revealed as a type of Israel *and* the Lord Jesus

Christ. In **Jonah 1:1**, God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, a Gentile city, and preach against their wickedness for it had reached up to God in heaven. As a prophet, Jonah had been called to carry God's message to the Gentile nations, particularly to those within the city of Nineveh. However, Jonah did not heed God's call. Rather than going to Nineveh as the Lord commanded, Jonah fled to Great Britain, as far as he could from Nineveh.

In the type, Israel had been called by God to preach to the Gentiles (**Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 43:9-12**). However, Israel failed miserably at this. Rather, they continually fell away from the Lord in unbelief, disobeying God's will. But recorded in **Matthew 24:14**, we see that Israel's mission in the future to be ministers of the Lord and preach to all the Gentile nations of the world will finally be accomplished.

"Therefore you are My witnesses, says the Lord, that I am God...This people (Israel, My chosen) I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise." (Isaiah 43:12b, 21)

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:13)

Jonah's disobedience to God is a type of Israel's disobedience in refusing to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. Rather, they went in a completely different direction, in acts of self-righteousness. Therefore, God scattered them in the midst of the Gentile nations where they served other gods and had no rest. And while Israel is in the land today, out of God's will, there remains an unrest among the Gentile nations (nations through which Satan and his angels rule).

While Jonah was in a ship sailing to Great Britain, God sent a great storm over him which caused the other crew members to become afraid. The crew asked a series of questions to Jonah, seeking to discern the reason for the great storm. When Jonah told them that he had fled from the presence of the Lord, the crew became terrified and threw him overboard. After this, there was relief for the ship and its crew, and they were saved.

In the antitype, Israel had fled from the presence of the Lord when they disobeyed, rejected and crucified Him. Because of this, God scattered

them amongst the Gentiles and cast them aside, offering salvation (the heavenly portion of the kingdom) to the Gentiles.

Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it! (Acts 28:28)

But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. (Romans 11:11)

Although Jonah was cast into the sea, his tribulation was not permanent. God still had a purpose to be fulfilled in Jonah, which was to preach His Word to the Gentiles. Therefore, God preserved Jonah by preparing a great fish to swallow him. While Jonah was in the belly of the fish (the place of death), he repented to God and cried out because of his affliction. God heard his cry and on the *third* day, God resurrected Jonah and commanded the fish to put him on dry land.

Likewise, God still has a purpose to be fulfilled in Israel, which is that they preach the Word of the kingdom to the Gentiles. God has preserved a remnant, just as He preserved Jonah. During the Great Tribulation, Israel's affliction will bring them to call upon the Lord. He will hear their cry and deliver them. On the *third* day, He will resurrect them and place them back into their land (**Jeremiah 30:10**). And the death and resurrection of Jonah on the third day typifies the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day as well as Israel.

Since the setting aside of the nation at the beginning of this dispensation, Israel has remained in the place of death. However, on the third day, at the end of this dispensation, Israel will be raised to newness of life.

I will return again to My place till they acknowledge their offense.

Then they will seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

After two days, He will revive us. On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. (Hosea 5:15-6:2)

After two thousand years, beginning the third one thousand-year period, Israel's resurrection will take place. The veil will be removed from her eyes and she will see. The Lord will give her a new heart and put a new spirit within her (**Ezekiel 36:26**), and He will put His laws in her mind and write them in her heart (**Hebrews 8:10**). He will cleanse her and restore her to her land where she will live in His sight, in His holy city, Jerusalem.

After Jonah was restored to his land, God commanded him again to preach the message to the city of Nineveh. This time Jonah entered the city and cried out,

“Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (**Jonah 3:4a**)

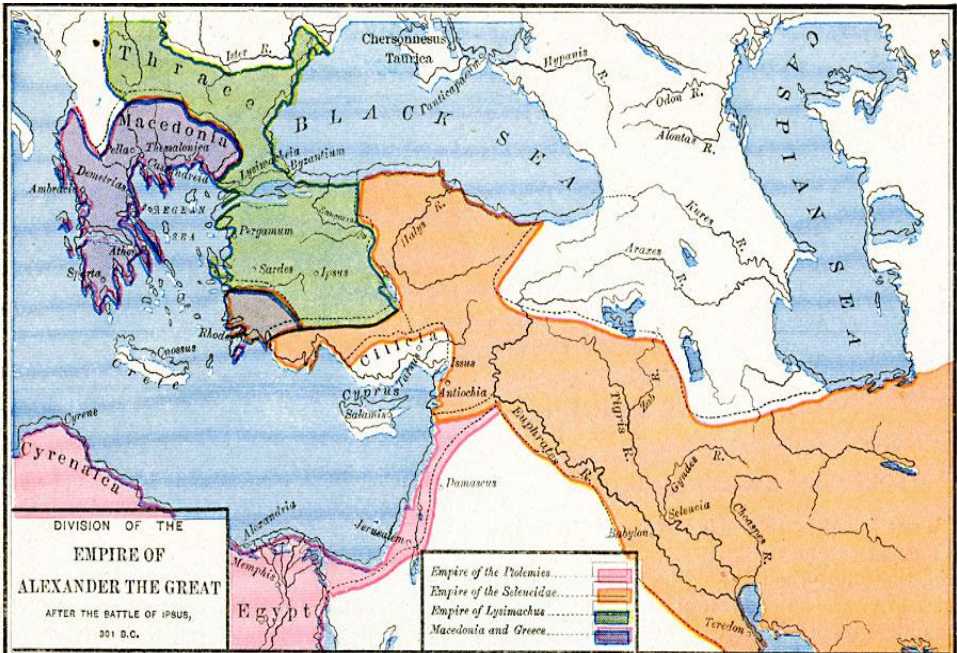
When they heard Jonah's cry, the Gentiles believed. Likewise, when Jesus ministered to all, preaching the kingdom of heaven, it was the Gentiles who believed. And, in the end times, when the 144,000 Jews preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the Gentiles, they will either choose to believe or be overthrown. With Jonah, the Gentiles repented and God kept them from destruction.

At the time when Jesus was preaching the kingdom of heaven to the nation of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign because they had evil intentions. During this time, Jesus mentioned Jonah:

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." (**Matthew 12:39-41**)

In **Matthew 12:39-41**, Jesus prophesied His death and resurrection, revealing the sign of the third day. Jesus prophesied of His resurrection after two days (on the third day) just as Jonah was resurrected after two days. This typifies the future resurrection of Israel and the Church on the third day. Following, *the men of Nineveh* (the Gentiles) *will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it* (as rulers with Christ) *because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed "a greater*

than Jonah" is here, who is Jesus the Christ.



CHAPTER FIVE – PART TWO

THE BEATITUDES

The Sermon on the Mount was not given as the way of [spirit] salvation for the unsaved, but as the way of [soul] salvation for the saved. The Beatitudes define the characteristics of an overcomer, the qualifications needed for every believer to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Just prior to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, John the Baptist had been preaching, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" He gave instructions on the first qualification needed for the Jews to enter the kingdom. Afterwards, Jesus added to this prerequisite all the requirements necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven in His sermon on the mount.

In **Matthew 3:11, 12**, John the Baptist says,

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Baptizing in water is the act of repentance, of committing oneself to the Lord in putting to death the flesh and walking according to the Spirit. In this case, water symbolizes a cleansing of ones sins. Jesus baptizes Christians with the Holy Spirit and with fire (judgment). So through Christ, believers are presently baptized with the gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**). The Holy Spirit guides us through our lives to qualify for our soul salvation. At the Judgment seat, Christ will baptize with fire, judging the works of all believers as they are tested in the fire.

...each one's work will become clear; for the Day (Day of the Lord) will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

In **1 Corinthians 3:13**, Paul states that if a believer's works are done in Christ (through the power of the Holy Spirit), he will live and qualify to enter the kingdom of heaven. However, if a believer's works are not done in Christ, then he will not qualify to enter the kingdom of heaven -- he will lose his soul-life and be cast to outer darkness for 1000 years. Then, he reassures the believer that his eternal salvation is secure after the 1000 years has ended, once his soul has been cleansed through fire.

During Jesus' ministry, He preached, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" (**Matthew 4:17**). The Greek (Strong's #G1448) definition of *at hand* is "draw near" or "approach." During this time, Jesus spoke to His disciples at the top of the mountain, giving them the qualifications needed to enter the coming kingdom of heaven. Initially, we see that the Beatitudes were first preached to the disciples, who then were to go and proclaim it to the Jews. Due to Israel's rejection of the kingdom of the heavens and their subsequent setting aside, we find that the Beatitudes were then directed to the Church who became the recipient to the offer of the heavenly kingdom. Jesus commanded His apostles *to make disciples of all nations* just before He ascended into heaven:

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
(**Matthew 28:19, 20**)

Jesus told His apostles to teach *all nations* to observe *all things* that He had commanded them. This included the Sermon on the Mount.

Note that when Jesus preached the Beatitudes, it was directed towards believers, not to the unsaved. For how can the unsaved try to qualify for the kingdom of heaven? They can't, because within them they do not possess the Spirit as a prerequisite to qualify or to run the race. Only the saved, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can try to attain this qualification.

Jesus' sermon instructs a saved person on what he must do to enter the coming kingdom of heaven in order to live, rule and reign with Christ. His sermon therefore is a plan of salvation for the believer to prepare for the Judgment seat of Christ on that future Day.

Each element of qualification begins with the word "Blessed." The Greek (Strong's # G3107) definition of *blessed* is "fortunate" or "happy." And because Jesus began and ended each element with a positive outcome, it can only mean that He was teaching on how to attain future rewards. These rewards have to do with gaining the inheritance into the kingdom of heaven. Loss of rewards for the believer is not mentioned here, but mentioned later in the Matthew parables.

1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The Greek definition (Strong's #G4434) of *poor* is "needy" or "beggar." A Christian who is needy in spirit is one who searches and strives to know God, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach him. He is passionate for the Lord through His Word. And the more a Christian seeks His Word, the more God will reveal to him the deeper truths of His wisdom, wisdom pertaining to His future kingdom and an inheritance. A Christian who is a "beggar" in spirit is one who has put away all pride and hardness of heart. More importantly, he has cleared his mind completely of what he has been taught by man, desiring only the "pure milk" of the Word. One must become humble as a child so that the Holy Spirit will be able to teach him to a level of "*epignosis*," which is the "super knowledge" of His Word. He must immerse himself with the truth of the Word. As a result of this maturity, the Christian can grow to become pure in heart, holy and without blemish, doing good works acceptable to God.

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for as such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:14)

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:2-4)

A little child eagerly allows a parent or teacher to train him. The same is required of all Christians in order to inherit the coming kingdom---they must submit to the training of God.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.
(Colossians 2:8-10)

Because of the leaven that was placed in the Word by the tares (false teachers), the Word was taught in a contaminated and distorted way. Only by and through the study of God's Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit are we able to have a full understanding of the Truth and be transformed like Christ. Only then can we be found worthy to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Our qualification requires continual determination and action to gain understanding of His Word. If we passionately desire to know Him, God will do His work in us that will eventually change us into the likeness of His Son. We will never be the same again --- nor will we want to!

2) “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Mourning reflects a determination to please the Lord and to walk in Him. It is an act of maturity. There are several reasons why a faithful Christian mourns. When he sins, he feels conviction from the Holy Spirit and he mourns. Christian sorrow leads to repentance and confession of sin, which leads to soul salvation (**2 Corinthians 7:10a**). He mourns because he yearns to be delivered from his body of death, constantly fighting off the flesh, the world and the devil. Carnal Christians, who live for the world and have no obedience to God, will not mourn when they sin. Since they do not walk in the Lord, they feel no conviction when they sin, nor do

they confess it. Rather, they laugh at their sins.

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:8-10)

A faithful Christian will experience mourning during times of conviction and chastening. Mourning therefore is a continual experience for the faithful believer. We must see mourning as a step into maturity, realizing that we care and hope for something much bigger than what this world can offer --- living with Christ in the kingdom of heaven.

A faithful Christian mourns when he is rejected and persecuted for the Truth. He also mourns because he is in the midst of an evil generation and he finds no comfort in this world. He is an outcast here, set apart from the world, and surrounded by many enemies. He mourns for the Lord, awaiting His return.

Because of Israel’s continual sin, God will bring great affliction upon them during the Tribulation in order for them to repent. At Christ’s second coming, every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him and they will mourn. And the martyrs who will be killed for the Word of God during the Tribulation will mourn under the altar of God, awaiting His vengeance.

When will the believer ultimately be comforted? It will be in the age to come as we see recorded by the Spirit of the Lord:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;

That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3) [See also Jeremiah 31:12, 13; Revelation 7:17]

For those who overcome and endure to the end, in the age to come, the mourning will cease and joy will take its place.

Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. (John 16:20-22)

3) ***“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”***

Man’s secular view regarding the reason great kings and leaders prosper is because they are proud men, cunning, powerful, boisterous and disputant. But God says that they will be cut off, their fortresses devastated and their streets made desolate. God affirms that at the end of this age the meek will be the ones to inherit the earth.

The Hebrew word *meek* (Strong's #H6035) is translated "humble" or "mild," and is derived from a verb meaning "to be afflicted" or "to be bowed down." It is also frequently used to refer to the poor or oppressed. The greatest example of meekness is seen with Jesus when He was unjustly accused, persecuted and crucified on the Cross. Yet when accusations were made against Him He did not defend Himself, nor was He full-tongued or threatening, but meek and quiet (**Matthew 26:62, 63;**

Isaiah 53:7). It signifies strength of character during persecution. Jesus' silence marked His innocence.

God expects the same characteristic from Christians. Such character is rooted in a strong faith in God and obedience to His commandments. Consequently, a Christian cannot progress spiritually until he learns to be meek. When we are meek, we look to the Lord who provides power by His grace. When God permitted Satan to afflict Paul it was done to prevent pride. God's answer to Paul's prayer to remove the affliction was this:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." **(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

Paul gladly submitted to the Lord, saying:

Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
(2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)

The principle of not defending ourselves against accusations but remaining humble and gentle will keep us from becoming prideful and aggressive. We are to remain peaceable and pure, not causing strife, but looking to the Lord for His strength.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. **(James 3:6a)**

The characteristic of meekness separates us from the accusers and persecutors who are proud men, looking to exalt themselves rather than exalting God. But the humble and meek have put on the image of Christ, and have the fruits of the Spirit.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats or be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when

they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct (meekness) in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:14-17)

In **Psalms 37:11**, we see that *"the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."* God views the humble and meek Christian as one who is teachable, who is willing to hear His Word and abide by His commandments. But the proud are not teachable, their hearts are hardened, their eyes and ears are shut, they are self-centered and cause strife.

The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. (Psalms 25:9)

Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5)

Pride was the characteristic that Satan possessed, causing his fall.

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!*

*For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the
Mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will
ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most
High.'*

*Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the
Pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

The humble Christian is able to mature in the Word and become more like Christ, thereby able to qualify to rule and reign in that future Day. Jesus Christ, as our greatest example, says:

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29)

Jesus had a humbled heart. If He abides in us, pride will not dominate our lives. When Jesus made the triumphal entry into Jerusalem at His first coming, it was to signify His sacrifice as a humble Servant to God the Father. The Son of God rode in on a donkey, humble and poor. But when He returns the second time as King of kings, He will be clothed in royal apparel with crowns on His head, riding on a white horse coming with a rod of iron (**Matthew 21:1-11; Revelation 19:11**). The humble will be exalted!

4) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

The Hebrew translation for *righteousness* (Strong’s #H6664) is “just, holy, innocent.” Presently, Jesus Christ is the only One who is truly righteous, without sin. Yet by practicing righteousness, we also will be declared righteous. Our righteousness is not declared through our own works or good deeds, but through works approved by God emanating from the fruits of the Spirit. When one seeks righteousness through Christ, he is learning this from the Word of God and then allowing the Holy Spirit to work through him.

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger and He who believes in Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)

“I am the living bread which comes down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

In **John** chapter **six**, Jesus refers to His flesh as His Word (the food, the bread of life) and His blood (the drink, the fountain of waters) as His Spirit. Without His Word and without His Spirit, we cannot do righteous works approved by Him, nor can we enter the kingdom of heaven in that Day. So when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, we are eating and drinking (in a figurative sense) of His Flesh (the Word) and of His Blood (the Holy Spirit) to attain holiness — *we are transforming like Christ*. This is the requirement for attaining the crown of righteousness in the age to come.

“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27)

Consequently, when one eats the food of the world and not of the Word of God, that food will perish and the believer will not attain age-lasting (Millennial) life in the kingdom. But when a believer hears and does what the Word of God says in accordance to holy living, then he will be declared righteous and possess age-lasting life in the heavenly kingdom.

The precepts of the beatitudes paves the way to possessing the righteousness of Christ. And God says that this is not difficult to do, but attainable, being born of God through faith in Christ (**1 John 5:3-5**). We cannot accomplish this on our own, but we can accomplish this through Christ who gives us strength.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:13)

In **1 Peter 1:14-16**, the Word commands us to be *obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*

Christians, who make up the body of Christ, are to be holy because Christ is holy. The Spirit of Christ dwells in our spirit and because we house the Spirit, we are the Spirit’s temple and therefore should be holy.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17)

Christians are called to seek the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them into a pathway of holy living. And because the Spirit of Christ dwells in our spirit we ought to practice walking in holiness by putting away sin.

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. (1 John 2:29)

He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. (1 John 3:7)

However, believers who live unholy lives are neglecting their gift of the Holy Spirit and are following the devil's pattern.

The wicked man does deceptive work, but he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward. As righteousness leads to life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death. (Proverbs 11:18, 19)

To hunger for righteousness is to abide in the higher knowledge of the Word (**Luke 4:4**). To thirst for righteousness is to receive the Holy Spirit in faith. (**John 7:37**) Both are required to mature and to qualify for the crown of righteousness. Faith and works are a necessity for attaining righteousness — they go hand in hand. If we say we have faith, but do not read and mature in His Word, how can we know how to be righteous in God's eyes? An impossibility!

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:13, 14)

Solid food is the mature Word of God, able to give those who digest of it the skill of righteousness. Furthermore, hungering and thirsting for righteousness according to His Word is a condition that must be met in order to inherit the kingdom.

Do you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? (1 Corinthians 6:9)

In **Matthew 6:33**, our Lord Jesus Christ urges the disciples to *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*. Melchizedek, who is a type of Christ, is called the king of righteousness in **Hebrews 7:11**. He was priest and king of the Most High God and is a type of our future King-Priest

Jesus Christ, the One who will give the power of an endless life. Jesus Christ is the King of Righteousness and is our greatest example.

"Behold the days are coming," says the Lord, " that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5, 6)

When we put on Christ, we put on righteousness. And like Paul, believers who endure to the end will be rewarded the crown of righteousness in that Day.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7, 8)

5) ***"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."***

One of the characteristics of the Spirit is *mercy* — an active part of the believer showing compassion either by word or deed to another. Mercy is the act of kindness emanated by the Holy Spirit that renders help to those who are suffering and are in need (**Galatians 5:22**). The need may be material, physical or spiritual and is given freely. Christians who are merciful to others will obtain mercy from Christ and save their soul at His Judgment seat.

The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh. (Proverbs 11:17)

Because of God's divine grace, He had mercy on us even when we were spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. While we were yet His enemies, He gave His Son so that we may have life in the age to come. We also, having the Spirit of mercy in us through Christ, should reflect this compassion to everyone, whether friend or foe, so that we may obtain mercy as well.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)

The challenge is to be merciful to all, whether we think they deserve it or not. We should not pick and choose who to be merciful to for God has commanded that we be merciful to all. God has shown mercy to all, whether friend or foe.

Concerning the gospel they (Israel) are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers...For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. (Romans 11:28-32)

But at His judgment seat, those who were not merciful during this age will not obtain mercy from Him. They will be cast out of the kingdom — *For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13)*

6) “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Believers who are "pure in heart" have allowed the Spirit to lead over their conscience, feelings, thoughts, desires and pleasures (**Palm 51:10**). When we love from a pure heart, our inner thoughts and feelings are sincere and clean. In fact, all that we do and say should come from a pure heart. Our faith and our works should be sincere and pure.

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

The only way a believer can be "pure in heart" is first by a process of spiritual growth which can only come from the study of the Word of God. Second, a believer must confess his sins so that he is forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. As he matures, the believer practices

doing good works, allowing the Holy Spirit to work through him. This transformation, therefore, includes dying to the flesh and living in the Spirit. And this is a *daily* process. As a result of this, one can grow to become pure in heart, holy and without blemish. This is part of one's transformation. Jesus says that only the "pure in heart" will ascend into His Millennial kingdom and stand in His holy place:

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Psalm 24:3-5)

The pure in heart "*shall see God.*" As mortal beings we cannot see God with our human eyes, for we will die. Just as Moses was not able to see God's face on the mountain but just a glimpse of His back, nor can any other mortal being see God (**Exodus 33:20-23**). We cannot begin to comprehend what Moses experienced in that dramatic encounter, but even more astonishing is when the "pure in heart" stand before the Lord in that Day, they will be able to see Him face to face in the kingdom of heaven and live!

7) "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*"

A peacemaker is a believer who possesses godly wisdom and who meekly shows it with good works. The main characteristic of godly wisdom is that it is pure, meaning free from defilement. Godly wisdom is also peaceable, describing a spirit of tranquility and calmness, yet it is undivided, unwavering and consistent. A peacemaker's good works are shown by his peaceable conduct towards others, one who allows the Holy Spirit to control his tongue; and, one who makes peace with all and does not promote or involve himself in disputes.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:17, 18)

Pursue peace will all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

In addition, peacemakers should make every effort to live peaceably with others who do evil towards them. By doing so, they encourage others around them to aspire to the good.

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:17-19)

Christians are presently undergoing child-training as sons (**Hebrews 12:5-8**), with a view to a future adoption (**Romans 8:14-23**) as only “sons” are able to rule and reign with Christ. If a Christian is submissive to this child-training and spiritually grows to sonship then he can become a peacemaker, striving to be peaceable to all men and bringing rival parties together. Then, Christ one day when He redeems the inheritance will choose him as His bride and adopt him as a firstborn son of God.

9) “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Not only are we called to live righteously, but to patiently endure persecution for living righteously.

For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?

But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth.” Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return;

when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Peter 2:20-24)

In this day in age, faithful Christians are increasingly outnumbered by the wicked and unfaithful. Therefore, persecution against faithful Christians is prevalent. Faithful Christians struggle with revilers, rejecters of the truth, spiritual warfare, heretical doctrine and practice, and spiritual apathy.

But God is the Overseer of our soul (1 Peter 2:25), our Protector, our Guardian, the One who watches over us. Observing how Christ handled unjust punishment gives us insight as to how we also may endure such trials.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats or be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct (meekness) in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:14-17)

Satan, as the father of unrighteousness, lurks in the midst of Christians. Therefore, we must be careful with our choices. When we choose to live righteously, we choose Christ, and when we choose to live un-righteously we choose Satan. There is no in between. This is why we are not to associate with the unrighteous (2 Timothy 3:5-8), because they entice us to follow in their evil ways. And because there is so much evil in this world, Christians who chose to live godly will inevitably suffer persecution.

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the

things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:12-15)

If we remain patient and faithful during persecution, God will deliver us through it all, just as He delivered Paul.

“And out of them all, the Lord delivered me.” (2 Timothy 3:11)

God does not promise us that He will keep us from persecution, but that He will deliver us through it. God teaches us how we should conduct ourselves in times of persecution---*rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse (Romans 12:12-14).*

When we bless those who persecute us with acts of kindness, we are encouraging them to aspire to the good, and perhaps bringing them to conviction and repentance. If we remain godly and faithful through persecution we will inherit the kingdom in the age to come.

9) “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

When we are strong in the faith and trust in the Lord to help us through persecution, we will be victorious. Knowing this, we are to be joyful that persecutions come our way as this gives us the opportunity to show our faith and righteousness in Christ our Lord. It is easy to repay evil with evil to those who persecute us. The challenge will be to bless them, be kind to them and pray for them. When we do this — great is our reward in heaven.

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all His judgments were before me; And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.

Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness in His eyes. (2 Samuel 22:21-25)

Christ stood on top of the mountain when He gave His incredible sermon. This account pictured for us His position as King and Priest, placed high above the mountain to lead and teach His people, an event that will soon be realized. As disciples of Christ, we are considered the salt and light of the world. Salt is good when it retains its flavor. When we strive to attain all the characteristics set forth in the Beatitudes, by word and by deed, then we will be worthy disciples. God commands Christians to model the characteristics of Jesus Christ --- to be holy and set apart without blemish and to remain steadfast in the ministry for Christ. We are the light of the world. Christ says,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Our ministry for Christ should not be hidden, but should be made apparent to all; to be revealed in godly behavior and in spreading the Word of truth.

What constitutes good works pleasing to God? Good works must emanate from the Holy Spirit, according to the Word of God. Some of these works are revealed in **John 15:1-5**, **Galatians 5:22**, and **Ephesians 5:8**. Abiding in the will of the Lord is not based on feelings or emotions, but on the act of applying our minds to Scripture and then applying His Word to our daily life experiences.

Do not be deceived. Our good works and stewardship for God must be done in word *and* in deed. Along with righteous living, we must not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, or hide our service for fear of rejection from man. For Christ says,

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”
(Mark 8: 38) See also Luke 9:26, 27

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (1Timothy 4:12, 13, 16)

CHAPTER FIVE – PART THREE

MATTHEW PARABLES

The mysteries of the kingdom (**Matthew 13:11; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-6; 5:25-32; Colossians 1:26, 27**), which is “the offer of the kingdom of the heavens taken from Israel and given to the Church,” were presented in parables by Jesus Christ during His ministry. The definition of a parable is *a truth placed alongside a previously revealed truth in order to give additional explanation; a symbolic narrative placed alongside a truth*. These mysteries were hidden from the Old Testament prophets, but were revealed in the New Testament to the Church.

These mysteries, presented in parables, are truths that have its roots in the Old Testament from the beginning, and were unveiled in the New Testament. The Jews did not understand them because their eyes and ears were closed; their hearts were dull. These mysteries however, were understood by the Church, who did not reject the Word of the kingdom but who did indeed “*bear the fruits thereof*” — that is, until Satan attacked, as he sought to subvert the Word of the kingdom and prevent Christians from understanding the message.

The seven parables of **Matthew** chapter **thirteen** concern the removal of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel (because of their unbelief, disobedience and unfruitful state) and given to the “one new man in Christ,” i.e. the Church, those *bearing the fruits thereof*.

The first four parables cover the entire present dispensation, in relation to the offer of the Word of the Kingdom and fruit-bearing amongst Christians. The first parable, Parable of the Sower, lays the foundation in regards to the Word of the kingdom and fruit-bearing, with the following parables presenting additional explanation. The fourth parable provides a brief explanation of the final condition of the Church, a condition reflecting a completely leavened state (a state of deterioration throughout the Church). Conditions of the Church at the end of this present dispensation are described in **Revelation 3:17** as “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.*”

The Word of the kingdom, taught by Jesus Himself and the first century

Church at the beginning of the dispensation, will be completely omitted within the Church at the end of the dispensation. Jesus prophesied in **Luke 18:8** that the Son of Man will not find “the faith” being taught in the Church at the time of His return. The work of the leaven throughout the age initiated by Satan would have gradually brought about this change. Today, we are witnesses to this leavened state of the Church --- which means that this present dispensation is near its close.

The last three parables cover the time period from the removal of the Church to the beginning of the Kingdom Age. God resumes His dealings with the nation of Israel on the earth while the Church is in the heavens.

The remaining ten parables in the Book of **Matthew** concern the *qualification* needed to gain a position of rulership in the kingdom of the heavens. It covers the rapture of all Christians to heaven, the Judgment seat of Christ, the determinations of rewards or loss for every Christian, and the structure of the coming kingdom.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 13:1-9)

The Parable of the Sower, the first of four parables which Christ gave outside of the house of Israel, by the sea (*sea* referring to “Gentiles; Gentile nations”), depicts four types of Christians in response to their hearing of the Word of the Kingdom and their fruit-bearing, *with the kingdom of the heavens in view*. Jesus was revealing in this parable a kingdom that was about to be offered to a people other than Israel (because of their failure to produce fruit), to the “new creation in Christ,” about to be realized. The parable of the Sower was given to bring light to the existence of this new creation, i.e. the Church, as the recipient to the kingdom of the heavens. God would deal with a different nation with respect to the opportunity of bringing forth fruit for the kingdom (**Matthew 21:43**).

In **Matthew 13:18-23**, Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower:

“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

“The Sower” in this parable is identified as the *Son of Man*, a Messianic title — Jesus Christ. The parable reveals that He has sown Christians (“*the seed of Abraham, the seed of Christ*” and by definition “*seed*” referring to “child” or “children” of God) in the field, meaning in the world. This is also in line with the second parable, The Parable of the Wheat and Tares, where “good seeds” representing individuals, are again

sown by Christ in the field (*the field is the world*) and are identified as the “*sons of the kingdom*” (**Matthew 13:38**).

Therefore, Christ has scattered the “seeds” or Christians all over the world to hear the Word of the kingdom and to bear fruit – to produce good works concerning this message. However, Christians who have no interest in the Word and have been misled by Christian leaders will not understand the message of the Kingdom. These “seeds” or Christians have fallen by the wayside (“away from the right path” or “way on the other side”). And because they do not understand the message, they will reject it completely. They will allow Satan to devour what was planted in their heart concerning the Word of the kingdom and to destroy it. These are Christians sown by the *wayside*.

Some of these individuals may be involved with a Church serving out of their own self-efforts, producing works of the flesh. They see no need to learn God’s Word to maturity, but are kept babes in Christ, preferring to follow the traditions and doctrines of men which have no validity to the Word of God. They are satisfied with their pre-conceived notions; they are blind to the Truth. Without realizing, they are following doctrines of demons and are serving the works of the devil. Sadly, they represent a great percentage of Christians within the Church today.

When Jesus Christ preached the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in their blinded condition, they did not heed the message. Most of the Church, also in its blinded condition, will not heed the message either. Unfortunately, the result is that these “*wayside*” believers are left without any hope for the coming kingdom.

The second type of Christian identified in this parable is the “*stony*” believer. These individuals sown into stony places represent Christians who hear the Word of the kingdom, understand it, and receive it with joy. These are Christians who receive this new-found message with great excitement. But because they have no “root,” are not deeply grounded or knowledgeable in the Word of the kingdom, they cannot stand for long against tribulation or persecution. This is symbolized by the sun’s strong heat that torches down on the seed and it withers away (**Matthew 13:6**). It is a picture of Satan’s attack on Christians who hear and receive the Word of the kingdom.

The Word of the kingdom is a message having to do with Christ and His co-heirs ruling the earth in that coming Day, ruling in the stead of Satan and his angels. Therefore, Satan will do everything in his power to prevent this message from ever being heard and received by Christians. Through other Christians, Satan brings about tribulation or persecution in the life of the one who has joyfully received the message. More than likely, this persecution will come from leaders and friends of the Church, exactly as it was with Israel when the offer of the kingdom was rejected by the Jewish religious leaders. There will be leaders or members of the Church who will discourage others from accepting the kingdom message. They will bring down the message of the kingdom by associating it with error, cultism, etc. And because of the joyful believer's lack of knowledge in the faith, he is overcome and he falls away. Satan will devour these believers through these leaders. This is exactly what the scribes and Pharisees did with the Jews. Jesus called them hypocrites and proclaimed,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in...Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation.”
(Matthew 23:13, 14)

The third type of Christian presented is the “*thorny*” believer. These Christians, who are sown among thorns, represent individuals who hear the Word of the kingdom and receive it for a while, but because of “*the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches,*” they bear no fruit. Eventually, they give up on the Word and fall away completely, being overcome by the enemy.

This “world,” one of the three enemies of God (**James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17**), is best translated this “age.” The parable of the Sower recorded in **Luke 8:14** adds a third hindrance in respect to fruit-bearing for the kingdom — the “*pleasures of this life.*”

If one has the love of this world, he cannot fix his attention and keep it fixed on the Word of the kingdom. He is too busy with the things in the world. Christians are to look from the things of this present world system unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (**Hebrews 12:1, 2**). Furthermore, Christians are to keep their eyes fixed on Christ as they endure sufferings (tribulations or persecutions). Christ fixed His attention

on “*the joy that was set before Him*” as He “*endured the cross, despising the shame*” (**Hebrews 12:2**). The moment one looks back and strays away from the faith, Satan will use the things in the world in his deceiving efforts to bring about one’s fall.

The fourth type of Christian is identified in this parable as a “*good ground*” believer. These Christians sown into good ground represent individuals who hear the Word of the kingdom, understand it and commit their lives to it, thereby producing fruit. They do not allow *anything* to deter them as they progress toward maturity. These Christians are those who are set apart from the world and its lusts. Their eyes are fixed on the goal out ahead, looking unto Jesus and the coming kingdom. These Christians are the ones who will be successful in their race of the faith, each bringing forth fruit in varying amounts — “*some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*”

These Christians are the only ones who will be allowed to rule and reign with Christ as co-heirs in that coming Day, occupying positions that commensurate with their fruit-bearing.

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Another parable He put forth to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servant of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’

He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind

them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”
(Matthew 13:24-30)

The parable of the wheat and tares is a continuation of the previous parable, the parable of the Sower, with the central focus being *fruit-bearing* for the kingdom. However, in this parable, it deals strictly with “good ground” believers, the fourth type of Christian in the parable of the Sower. Only the “good seed,” the good ground believers, are seen bringing forth fruit in this parable and are viewed as the “wheat,” the sons of the kingdom. As a continuation to the previous parable, we now are given additional information that affects fruit-bearing for the kingdom.

In the beginning of the parable, Jesus uses the expression, “*The kingdom of heaven is like...*” to compare one thing with another and could be translated to mean, “The kingdom of heaven has become like...” Jesus reveals in this parable that *while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.* This parable reveals Satan’s attack against good ground believers, seeking to prevent their fruit-bearing by destroying the message of the kingdom. And it is among these Christians whom Satan goes about seeking to counter God’s plans through sowing tares, that which resembles wheat though it is not wheat, as Satan will do everything within his power to prevent Christians from bearing fruit.

The “good seed” sown by the Lord throughout the world are referred to as “the sons of the kingdom.” Sonship implies rulership and therefore only sons can rule in God’s kingdom.

And Satan knows that the requirement for Christians to become “first-born sons of God” and to rule and reign in that future Day is that they must bear fruit for the kingdom. Therefore, in order to stop the fruit-bearing, Satan seeks to deceive the Church by placing “copy-cat” individuals in their midst to destroy the kingdom message from those who are producing fruit, the good ground believers.

Within Satan’s deceitful plan, he placed tares, “sons of the wicked one,” within the Church to destroy the Word of the kingdom. He first did this same exact thing with Israel and succeeded. Israel failed to bear fruit for the kingdom. The Jewish religious leaders were directly responsible for the nation’s rejection of the Word of the kingdom and their King. They had “*shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*” **(Matthew 23:13).**

And again, Satan proceeded to do this very same thing within the Church by using Christian religious leaders to bring about the same outcome.

Satan proceeded with his scheme almost immediately after the “one new man in Christ” [Church] was born and the good ground believers were beginning to produce fruit for the kingdom. We see that the *Jews who had believed on Christ (John 8:31)*, who were acknowledged by Christ to be *Abraham’s seed (John 8:37)*, were also identified, *because of their works*, to be of their *father the devil (John 8:44)*.

Therefore, we can see in these examples that the tares, the sons of the wicked one, are those within the Church — the saved and not the unsaved. It can be seen occurring throughout Christendom even today. The parable makes clear that the wheat and the tares are both saved individuals, as Jesus gives His servants instructions to leave the tares alone until the final judgment:

The servants said to him, “Do you want us to gather them (tares) up?” But he said, “No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest...” (Matthew 13:28-30)

In **Matthew 13:30**, the wheat and the tares are seen being dealt with at the same time and place — at the Judgment seat of Christ. The Lord’s judgment with both parties is in light of the same view — to judge their works (fruit-bearing) to determine entrance into or exclusion from the Millennial kingdom.

We see a further explanation of this in **Matthew 13:37-43** as Jesus explains the parable of the tares:

He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that

offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Scripture never presents the Lord's judgment with the saved and the unsaved being dealt with at the same time and place. The judgment for the Church will come first after their rapture to heaven. The judgment for the unsaved will not take place until after the Millennium, but before the Eternal Ages. Therefore, this parable clearly shows that both groups, the wheat and the tares are saved individuals being judged at the end of this age and then separated, *the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; the wheat is gathered into his barn (Matthew 13:30). ...the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43).*

Almost from the very inception of the Church, Satan has done everything in his power to destroy the most important message ever made available by God to man. It is a very sad picture to see immature Christians kept so blinded by the works of Satan and his demons. And a great danger exists for those Christians who have been given the knowledge of the kingdom and are producing fruit. They must be kept on guard at all times, for the moment that they take their eyes away from the goal of the kingdom, Satan is there to snatch them away. And it is a very real possibility for these Christians to quickly fall away solely by allowing the flesh and the things of this world to be the center of their attention.

Then there is one other issue that needs to be addressed about the tares whom Satan has sown within the Church. These tares, who are seeking to stop fruitful Christians from bearing fruit, are to be left alone (**Matthew 13:28-30; 15:13, 14**). Christ affirms that they will be dealt with at the end of this age and He alone will deal with them. Fruitful Christians have no part in judging (condemning) them, in bringing reviling accusations against them, engaging in confrontations or in trying to cast them out. Fruitful Christians are to ignore them and continue bearing fruit for the kingdom, keeping their eyes fixed unto Jesus and the coming kingdom.

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his

field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds, but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31, 32)

The parable of the mustard seed is a continuation of the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares, with fruit-bearing remaining the central focus. In the previous parable, Satan seeks to stop the good ground believers from bearing fruit by placing tares in the Church to destroy the message of the kingdom. Then, the parable of the mustard seed adds further commentary revealing the outcome of Satan’s actions.

The parable of the mustard seed presents how matters would continue with this unholy activity of the placing of tares within the Church. First, the parable demonstrates the mustard seed germinating and producing a natural growth for a while. It depicts a natural growth of this seed, “*the least of all seeds,*” which would result in “*an herb.*” When full grown, it would become “*the greatest among herbs*” (a bush), resulting in *fruit-bearing*. But Satan’s activity of the placing of tares was for the purpose of replacing the natural growth of the seed with an unnatural growth of the seed, thereby stopping fruit-bearing.

The mustard seed represents the good ground believers, the sons of the kingdom, and their development in fruit-bearing. The mustard seed is seen producing a natural growth for a little while. But shortly after the tares are placed, the mustard seed is seen experiencing an unnatural growth, becoming a “*tree.*” The mustard seed is seen developing so abnormally that the “*tree*” allowed “*the birds of the air,*” the sons of the wicked one, “*to nest in its branches.*” In other words, Christians doing the work of Satan (tares) within the Church are seen deceiving fruit-bearing Christians, resulting in their unfruitfulness; and the tares are so successful that they are able to rest in that which they had produced, satisfied with their accomplishment of their deceitfulness.

The “tares” in this parable can be identified as “*false teachers.*” And the matter in which these false teachers were successful in stopping the fruit-bearing was through the teaching and spreading of “*false doctrine.*” It was accomplished through Satan placing false teachers in the midst of fruit-bearing Christians, leading them away from the Truth of the Word, from the Word of the kingdom.

At the beginning of this dispensation, the first century Church proclaimed the message of the kingdom, the salvation of the soul, throughout Christendom. To counter the true message, Satan placed individuals proclaiming a false message in the midst of those Christians who had received the true message. Over time, the false message took over and did its damaging work. These false teachers responsible for corrupting the true message of the kingdom were Christians, who had, at one time, received the message of the kingdom; but then, at a later time, fell away or “apostatized.” “Apostasy” is the Greek word *apostasia*, meaning “to stand away from” which, in this case, refers to a person standing away from a place which he had previously occupied. Both in the Book of **second Peter** and the Book of **Jude**, warnings are given concerning these apostates or false teachers.

They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls.

They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness... (2 Peter 2:13c-15)

Note particularly the word “children” and “gone astray” in verses **fourteen** and **fifteen**. This is an indication that these false teachers are “children of God” and therefore Christians, but they have “*forsaken the right way and gone astray*” meaning they apostatized.

A further identification of these false teachers is recorded in **2 Peter 2:18-20**,

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again

entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

In verse **twenty**, we see that these Christians had escaped the “pollutions of the world” through the “knowledge [Greek word, *epignosis*, meaning ‘higher knowledge’] of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In other words, they had, at one time, come into a mature knowledge surrounding the Word of the kingdom; but then, they fell away and became false teachers, speaking evil and distorting the truth relative to the Word of the kingdom.

These apostates are seen “walking according to their own lusts” — being carnally minded, not spiritually minded. This type of walk produced an abominable message that sought to destroy the Word of the kingdom, particularly the teachings surrounding Christ’s second return and the Millennial kingdom:

“Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” (2 Peter 3:4)

The question in **2 Peter 3:4** poses a state of unbelief, having to do with denying Christ’s return at the end of six days (six thousand years from restoration), that which has its foundation in the beginning of **Genesis**. These apostates or false teachers are seen resting on a corrupted form of the foundation that God had established from the beginning, a foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests. Then, building on this corrupted foundation, the apostates began to spread “destructive heresies” relative to the Word of the kingdom among fruit-bearing Christians. This was so successful in stopping the fruit-bearing that it completely did away with the Word of the kingdom.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them (denying His return and His kingdom to come), and bring on themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

This particular type abnormal growth resulting from the false message of the apostates since the beginning of Church history was seen running its course throughout this dispensation and was successful in completing its destructive work at the near end of this dispensation, within the Church today. This abnormal growth of the mustard seed resulted in a *tree*, something it was not supposed to do. A “tree” is used in Scripture to symbolize a *national power* [nation(s), kingdom(s) — as seen in **Daniel 4:10-12; Matthew 21:18, 19**. And this is a position in which the Church occupied, associating themselves with Gentile world power under the present kingdom of Satan.

Even today, Christians can be found involving themselves in the present affairs of government in various ways, attempting to gain power in the present kingdom under Satan. But this is not the day when Christians are to rule and reign. That Day lies in the future under the rule and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will take the kingdom from Satan and then place His co-heirs (overcoming Christians) in positions of power and authority. The entire present world system under Satan will be destroyed when Christ returns and those Christians having works associated with the present system will see their works destroyed in the fire as well. But for Christians who sanctified themselves from this present system of government, they will possess works which will endure the fire and they will be the ones who will exercise the power in the age to come.

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.” (Matthew 13:33)

The parable of the leaven is the last of the four parables which Jesus gave outside the house of Israel, by the sea (“sea” referring to Gentiles). This parable reveals the end result from that which occurred in the first three parables. The parable begins again with “*The kingdom of heaven is like...*” and compares the Word of the kingdom to “*leaven.*” Leaven is a substance, such as yeast, to modify quality, causing gradual change and is used to make dough rise. Leaven was used in the Old Testament to symbolize that which caused corruption and degeneration. Therefore, the

Law of Moses did not allow the priests to use leaven in offerings because it showed corruption rather than purity.

And since leaven was always used to symbolize corruption in the Old Testament, Christ used leaven in this parable, for He knew the disciples would understand its meaning. In **Matthew 13:33**, the context used to point to the use of the word leaven has to do with “fruit-bearing.” The previous two parables reveal Satan introducing false doctrine by placing false teachers in the Church to stop fruit-bearing amongst Christians, which caused a rise in the corruption and degeneration of the Word of the kingdom. Then, the parable of the leaven reveals the outcome of the matter. It reveals that the message surrounding the proffered kingdom during the present dispensation would become completely “leavened.” The tares’ perversion of the Word of the kingdom would progressively spread throughout the entire Church bringing about the end of this dispensation.

Christ provides further explanation relative to the manner in which the Word was leavened. “*Three measures of meal*” refers to three measures of grain used to make bread (*bread* in Scripture symbolizes “the Word,” i.e., the Bread of life [**John 6:48**]). “Three” in Scripture is the number of *divine perfection*. Therefore, the three measures of meal is used to refer to the divine message given by Christ at His first coming — the Word of the kingdom.

“...in which the woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.” (Matthew 13:33)

The word “woman” when used symbolically in Scripture usually refers to “Israel.” When Jesus first preached the kingdom of heaven it was offered to Israel, but the tares were placed by Satan, the first tares being the Jewish religious leaders (the “woman”). We see this in **Matthew 16:6**:

Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”

And in **Matthew 23:13**:

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees hypocrites! For you shut up the

kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Later, when the offer of the kingdom was taken from Israel because of their unbelief and given to the Church, Satan again placed tares — Christian religious leaders. Since the damaging work of the leaven was *first* accomplished by Israel, this parable therefore references the “woman.” The woman then took and hid the three measures of meal, the Word of the kingdom, until it was all leavened. “*Took and hid*” explains exactly what manner they used to destroy the Word of the kingdom. These false teachers mixed heretical interpretations with Truth, so that those who received it perceived it as Truth. In other words, they would secretly distort the Scriptures by placing (hiding) false heresies within the Word of the kingdom. Peter warns Christians to beware of this corruption from false teachers in **2 Peter 2:1-3**:

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

Like Satan, these false teachers were cunning, mixing true and false doctrine together so that the Word seemed like the truth to those who heard it. They would take the pure milk of the Word and contaminate it. This is why Paul, Peter, Jude, John and Jesus Himself warned Christians about false teachers. John specifically states to rely on the Spirit of truth for *He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13)*.

The Lord knew exactly how conditions would exist at the end of the leavening process. He Himself warned Christians about these false teachers, as we see in **Matthew 7:15**,

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Paul also warned Christians about the peril of being deceived by false teachers, as we see recorded in **Acts 20:29-31**,

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Jude's writing is very similar to that of Peter, both providing extensive warnings of false teachers.

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

But you, beloved, remember the Words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having [holding fast to; devoting oneself to] the Spirit. (Jude 16-19)

Because the leaven has done its damaging work through these false teachers, the Church today, relative to teachings surrounding the Word of the kingdom, are in a *completely blind condition*. The teachings from the pulpit today will not utter one word surrounding the Word of the kingdom. Since the conditions of the Church today parallel the Laodicean Church described in **Revelation 3:17** as "*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked,*" it is clear to see that we are very near the close of this dispensation.

Christ Himself is pictured *outside the Church, knocking, seeking admission to those who are inside (Revelation 3:20)*. He extends this invitation to individual Christians and not to the Church as a whole, for the Church will reject the message as they have never recovered from the damage done by the tares. But the Lord continues to reach out to the few

individuals who will in fact heed His message. If one is willing to hear His voice and open the door, He will come in and dine with him, providing him with the Bread of life.

PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matthew 13:44)

The last three parables in **Matthew** chapter **thirteen** were given after Christ reentered the house of Israel. These three parables, along with the previous four parables, together reveal the events surrounding the Word of the kingdom from the inception of the Church to the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. The first four parables cover the entire present dispensation relative to the offer of the kingdom amongst Christians, with the message ending in a completely leavened state. The last three parables have to do with events occurring *after* the Church has been removed (raptured) from the earth to heaven. They present matters from the time that God has resumed His national dealings with Israel; hence, the reason why He goes back *inside the house*.

But although these last three parables give prominence to the nation of Israel on the earth, they also have an inseparable connection with the Church in heaven; both Israel and the Church being dealt with at the same time. All seven parables have to do with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens taken from Israel and given to the Church.

In the parable of the hidden treasure, we see that the Man, Christ, found a treasure and hid it in a field. After this, He went out, sold all He had, and bought the field where the treasure was hidden. In comparing the previous parables, we learn that the “field” is the *world* and through comparing Scripture elsewhere, we learn that the “treasure” is identified as *Israel*. Israel is God’s “*peculiar treasure*.” (**Exodus 19:5, 6**)

At Christ’s first coming, He came preaching and offering the kingdom of the heavens only to the house of Israel. This presents a picture of Christ finding the treasure. However, Israel rejected the offer; and, consequently, the kingdom of the heavens was taken from them and given to a new

nation “in Christ.” This presents a picture of Israel being set aside and Christ hiding the treasure. Christ’s finished work at Calvary, His blood sacrifice on the Cross not only for the sins of Israel but for the sins of the world, is a picture of the Man *selling all that He had*. Then, in the taking of the seven sealed scroll from God’s right hand, the purchase of the “field,” the world (the earth), will be realized.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16, 17)

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (the creation), to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

This parable, along with the other six parables, deals with the Word of the kingdom, the salvation of the soul. The purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure has to do with a redeemed inheritance, the redemption of the earth. This is a future work of Christ, made possible because of His past, and completed work at Calvary.

There is a parallel between the order of events portrayed in the first six parables in **Matthew** chapter **thirteen** and the order of events portrayed in the first nineteen chapters of the Book of **Revelation**. In the first four parables in **Matthew** chapter **thirteen**, Christ deals with the Church relative to the Word of the kingdom. Then, as Christ reenters the house of Israel, matters in the last three parables turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance. Keep in mind however, that although Israel is the focus of attention at this time, the Church is still in view relative to this redemption.

In **Revelation** chapters **one** through **four**, Christ deals with the Church relative to the Word of the kingdom. Then beginning in Chapter **five**, matters turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance. However, we must keep in mind again that the Church is still in view relative to this redemption. **Revelation** chapter **five** identifies the One

found worthy to break the seals for the opening of the judgments. Christ, loosening the seals, will bring all things in this entire redemptive process to pass. The inheritance will be redeemed, through judgment, both for Israel and the Church. The bride, previously chosen out from among the Church and revealed at the Judgment seat of Christ, will then become Christ's wife, ruling and reigning from the kingdom of the heavens. And Israel will once again become God's wife, ruling and reigning from their land on earth.

PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matthew 13:45, 46)

The parable of the pearl of great price is a continuation on the subject of *redemption* from the previous parable, the parable of the hidden treasure. The Man in the previous parable and the Merchant in this parable is the Lord Jesus Christ. In both parables, the Man or Merchant *selling all that he had* points to Christ's past, finished work at Calvary. The purchase in the previous parable was the field, i.e. the world (the earth). The purchase in this parable is the pearl of great price which is identified as *the bride of Christ*. The symbolism of the pearl of great price as the bride derives from the fact that the pearl comes from the sea which refers to the Gentiles, i.e., the Church. However, we see that the pearl is not considered to be the entire Church, but to a special few individuals chosen out from among the Church, considering how hard it is to find a "*pearl of great price*" in oysters at the bottom of the sea. There are many types of pearls, some more valuable than others. It is said that you would have to open upwards of 20,000 wild oysters to find one pearl of great price, which is the Tahitian or black pearl.

Therefore, the purchase of the field in the parable of the hidden treasure has to do with Christ's future work of redeeming the forfeited inheritance; and following this, we have presented the purchase of the pearl which has to do with the bride becoming Christ's wife. Christ purchases the bride through redeeming the inheritance. In other words, the inheritance has to be redeemed first, in order for the bride to become Christ's wife.

A type of these two parables can be seen in the Book of **Ruth**. In **Ruth** chapter **four**, Boaz (a type of Christ) redeems a forfeited inheritance, with Ruth (a type of the bride of Christ) becoming his wife through this redemptive act. Once the inheritance is redeemed, Ruth automatically became Boaz's wife. And the same process will take place in the age to come with Christ and His bride. Christ will redeem (purchase) the inheritance and then the bride (formerly chosen through determinations made at the Judgment seat of Christ) will automatically become Christ's wife.

In the beginning of this parable, we find that the Merchant, Christ, is *seeking* beautiful pearls. And from the beginning of this dispensation, the Spirit has been seeking a bride to rule and reign with Christ in His coming kingdom. Christ is presently exercising the office of High Priest on behalf of Christians. He is ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, seated at the right hand of the Father, on the basis of His Own blood, for Christians who sin. Christians who fall into sin have Christ as High Priest to effect cleansing from their sins. And the high priestly ministry of Christ is specifically for *the bride, the heirs of the kingdom*.

Only an overcoming Christian is considered a "pearl of great price." Only Christians who have endured the race of the faith during this present age and have made the proper preparations to meet the Lord will be chosen by Christ as His bride. A type of the bride of Christ can be seen in Ruth. Ruth endured the race of the faith, working in Boaz's field until the time of the harvest, (end of the age) and making the proper preparations for meeting Boaz at the threshing floor (Judgment seat of Christ). She wholly followed the instructions given by Naomi, a type of the Scriptures. She washed herself (confession of sins), anointed herself (allowed the Holy Spirit to lead her), and she put on her best garment (righteous acts; holy living). And because of this, Ruth was found worthy at Boaz's threshing floor to be his bride.

The same exact process is required of Christians in order to possess the wedding garment and be found worthy to be the bride of Christ, *the pearl of great price*. Those Christians properly dressed will be allowed to participate in the wedding festivities and in Christ's reign over the earth in that Day, as His consort queen.

PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”
(Matthew 13:47-50)

The parable of the dragnet is the seventh parable emitted by Jesus concerning the message of the kingdom of the heavens and completes the events of the redemption of the inheritance. These seven parables reveal the truths concerning Christ taking the kingdom of the heavens from the nation of Israel and offering it to the Church. Events in all seven of these parables are seen in chronological order, from the beginning to the end of this dispensation, and in the opening of the Lord’s Day --- resulting in 2,000 years since Pentecost. These seven parables do not speak of eternal verities but of the Messianic Era, the 1000 year reign of Christ, at the end of this age. Therefore, it speaks to and involves *all* Christians and never the unsaved.

The *“dragnet that was cast into the sea”* refers to God working among the Gentiles throughout this dispensation and removing from the Gentiles *“a people for His name”* (**Acts 15:14**). Christians, who are composed of both Jews and Gentiles, have been taken out of the Gentile nations [“sea” referring to Gentiles], to form the “one new man in Christ.” And the removal of Christians has to do with “the kingdom of the heavens.”

Events in this parable and the previous two parables all deal with the last seven years of Man’s Day. They occur during the Tribulation and immediately following Christ’s return. The phrase *“gathered some of every kind”* depicts all Christians, whether immature or mature, carnal or faithful, good or wicked — all had been removed from the Gentiles.

Once the dragnet was full, *“they drew to shore.”* This symbolizes all Christians who have been removed from the Gentiles, judged, and now, seven years later, brought to shore to be separated. And once separated,

the good are gathered into vessels, but the bad are cast away. This is the exact same picture presented in the parable of the wheat and the tares. The parable pictures the harvest (end of the age) followed by the reapers (angels) separating the wheat and the tares:

“First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:30).

At the end of this age, the overcomers previously judged will then enter the kingdom of heaven and the non-overcomers will be cast out of the kingdom for 1000 years.

“The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth [deep sorrow and utter regret]. (Matthew 13:49, 50)

The parable of the dragnet has to do with events occurring seven years following the Judgment seat of Christ, immediately preceding the Messianic Era, based on previous decisions and determinations rendered at the Judgment seat.

The Word of God has revealed all this to his servants beforehand. These mysteries of the kingdom were hidden in the Old Testament, but have been revealed in the New Testament. Christians have been given all there is to know in the Word of God in order to prepare themselves as good ground believers and to keep their eyes unto Jesus, the hope that is set before them — the kingdom of the heavens. The Word says that the condition of the Church and of the world will only deteriorate in the latter times. If you open your eyes and ears you can clearly see these poor conditions present today. We are clearly living in the latter times; the end times. The time is near when the elect from among the nation of Israel will become God’s wife and will rule and reign in Christ’s earthly kingdom. At the same time, the elect from among the Church will become Christ’s wife and will rule and reign in Christ’s heavenly kingdom. And there are so few that understand or accept this message. Yet, God desires that all Christians be saved wholly: spirit, soul and body.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24)

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4)

In summary, the previous seven parables explain events leading to the end of this age — to the kingdom of heaven, the salvation of the soul.

PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment be made.

The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were

very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (Matthew 18:21-35)

The parable of the unforgiving servant, as well as the following six parables, is with a view to the kingdom of heaven. This parable begins with *"the kingdom of heaven is like,"* a clear indication that the message pertains to the kingdom of heaven and our soul salvation. This parable instructs Christians about being prepared for the coming kingdom by living righteously, specifically about forgiveness, in order to qualify to enter the kingdom. Just as in all the previous parables, *"the certain king"* is Jesus Christ. The king *"wanted to settle accounts with his servants."*

This parable can be compared to the parable of the talents in **Matthew 25:14-30**. Both parables depict a king who *"wanted to settle accounts"* with his servants. Both provide examples concerning "profit" on an initial investment, the investment being the Lord's goods to all His servants. They were to "occupy" till He comes. In other words, they were to trade the goods that the Lord gave them in order to produce a profit. They were to produce good works during the present day with the goods (Holy Spirit and the Word) that the Lord gave them and then account for their works when the Lord returns.

As the king *began* to settle accounts (not yet exercising judgment), a servant was brought to his attention. This servant owed him *"ten thousand talents,"* an enormous debt that would be impossible to repay, meaning he lacked "an enormous amount" of good works in his life. Since the servant could not repay, the master (Jesus Christ) commanded that *"he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had."* At this point, the servant had not shown good works nor confessed his sins, therefore the Lord commanded that he and his goods be sold (as a slave of sin). The servant was leading a life of sin, and now would become a slave

of sin instead of a slave of God and of righteousness (**Romans 6:15-23**), that which eventually leads to death (**Romans 6:23**).

The servant pleaded with his master to give him time to repay the “ten thousand talents,” which signifies “*all*.” We see here that the servant was confessing his sins to the Lord. And presently, Christ Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, who makes intercession for us when we confess our sins. He is merciful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**). The king had pity on him and released him of his sin and forgave him.

In this scenario, the servant was forgiven and then given the opportunity to change his ways and repay the debt with good works in his life. But instead “*The servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii...*” The servant deliberately went to seek his fellow servant, his brother in Christ, to harm him and demand immediate payment of what he owed him. And when the fellow servant pleaded for some time to repay, the servant showed no mercy or compassion but threw him into prison. The servant was unforgiving to his fellow repentant brother, being disobedient to God’s commands, again not producing good works.

When other fellow servants saw what had been done, they grieved and came together to inform the master. The master became very angry and called him a “*wicked servant!*” He delivered him to the torturers until he should pay for his wicked ways.

This parable ends with the conclusion of the whole matter --- a Christian will face the same judgment if they do not forgive his brother, regardless of how often he sins against him. The time is near when we will have to give account of our works to Christ at His judgment seat.

“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses”
(Matthew 18:35).

A common (fleshly) act when a brother wrongs another is to retaliate instead of forgive. Anger and resentment builds up which leads to hate. This is a common reaction when one is living in the flesh and for the cares of this world. It is only through committing to live in the Spirit can we

truly act differently --- in a loving and compassionate way. Forgiveness must come from the heart, through the Holy Spirit. Humility allows us to forgive. Pride will keep one from forgiving his brother. Paul sums up how a Christian should act towards everyone:

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15)

Even to the point of death, Christ asked God to forgive man. Christ forgives us daily. Knowing this, we too must forgive others. How many times? Jesus said unto the disciples,

“I do not say up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22).

We must forgive the trespasses of our brother until the end. When we have learned to forgive, Christ will forgive us and reward us one day. But if we do not forgive our brother now, neither will Christ forgive us *then*.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14, 15)

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.” (Matthew 21:28-32)

In the parable of the two sons, Jesus was speaking to the Jewish religious leaders concerning repentant sinners. This parable has to do with “bearing fruit,” with the kingdom of the heavens in view. The qualification for entering the kingdom is dependent upon faithful obedience to the Word of God. The first son was asked to bear fruit for the kingdom and he refused. However he later felt conviction, repented and did his father’s will. The second son professed adherence to his father but produced no fruit, therefore he did not do the will of his father. The religious leaders were given this parable in order for them to repent. Even though the self-righteous leaders saw the example of repentant tax collectors and prostitutes, they refused to repent. Jesus condemned the leader’s conduct by assuring them that the repentant sinners would enter the kingdom before them. God takes delight when a sinner repents of his actions and is faithfully obedient to the will of God. In order to live humbly in faith and morally upright requires a continual look at oneself. One must have a repentant heart and allow the Holy Spirit to lead.

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted calf are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to

see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'For many are called, but few are chosen.' (Matthew 22:1-14)

The parable of the wedding feast covers a time period of two thousand years, from the Lord's first advent to just before His second return, at the end of the Tribulation, with the kingdom of the heavens in view. This parable begins with a king (God the Father), seeking to find a bride for his son (Jesus Christ). He is arranging the wedding festivities whereas he sends forth his servants to call on those who were invited (Israel), but they would not come. This is representative of the Lord's offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel during the Lord's first advent and their rejection of it.

He then extends another invitation (re-offer of the kingdom to Israel), but those invited still would not come. They not only ignored the call, but they mistreated the king's servants and killed them. When the king was made aware of what happened, he was furious. He sent forth his armies to destroy the murderers and to burn their city.

After Israel's climatic rejection, followed by Christ's departure from the house of Israel, Israel was set aside as a nation and found unworthy for the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore, the king sent other servants to invite a different group to the wedding festivities, the "one new man in Christ," the Church.

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." (Matthew 21:43)

Before the parable of the wedding feast was emitted, our Lord had revealed in **Matthew 21:43** that the kingdom of heaven would be taken from Israel and offered to the Church. However, the requirement for those chosen to enter the wedding festivities as the bride would be those who brought forth spiritual "fruit." Hence, those "chosen" will be those

selected individuals who are *called out* of the called (Church), those *bearing the fruits thereof*.

Those who consist of “the called,” whether good or bad, represent *all Christians*. We see this in **2 Corinthians 5:10**:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The good, who had prepared themselves for Christ, bearing fruit, were properly clothed, wearing their wedding garments. *The bad* did not take the offer seriously and were not prepared; therefore, they did not possess the wedding garments. The wedding garment is “*the righteous acts of the saints*,” recorded in **Revelation 19:8**.

When the wedding festivities were about to begin, the king comes in to see the guests and notices a man not wearing the wedding garment. “Works” had been tried and judged *seven years prior* at the Judgment Seat of Christ to determine the bride. Now, seven years later, due to prior decisions and determinations at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the separation is about to take place to identify the bride and begin the wedding festivities. The exact same picture is presented in **Matthew 13:24-30**, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, and in **Matthew 13:47-51**, in the parable of the dragnet. Since the man had no wedding garment, he showed no “righteous works.” Having not made the preparations, the man was not allowed to participate in the wedding festivities. In the antitype, this separation will take place at the end of the Tribulation, immediately *before* Christ’s second return, in heaven.

Apparently, the man had accepted (through faith) the invitation (spirit salvation) to come to the wedding but never prepared a garment for himself; he had no righteous works prepared during his lifetime. As a result, he was bound hand and foot, cast into outer darkness outside of the wedding festivities where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This parable covers the timeframe from the beginning of this dispensation to the end of the Tribulation, immediately before the opening of the Messianic Era and provides a complete word-picture of the events surrounding the selection of the bride of Christ. It begins with the offer of

the kingdom to Israel, the rejection of that offer, and the kingdom of the heavens taken from them and offered to the Church. The message of the kingdom was rejected by Israel twice in which the second time they mistreated and killed some of the apostles (**Acts 4:21; 5:40; 7:54-59**). This angered the Lord who allowed the Romans to destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D.

The invitation was then given to those in the “highways,” referring to Christians, those who would, in turn, do that which Israel had failed to do — *bring forth the fruits thereof* [fruits relating to the kingdom]. After Israel was set aside the early part of 63 A.D., the disciples were commissioned to deliver the message of the kingdom of the heavens to the Church. This is fully revealed through the Apostle Paul, seen throughout his Epistles in the New Testament. And just as this parable prophesies, some will heed this call and some will not. At the end of the age, those prepared to meet Christ wearing their wedding garment will enter the kingdom and those unprepared will not enter but be cast to outer darkness for 1000 years. They will not participate in the wedding festivities as the bride of Christ, but will be separated from His presence. *“For many are called, but few are chosen”* (**Matthew 22:14**). Many Christians will be called to the wedding feast, but few will be qualified to enter.

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur following the separation of the overcomers from the non-overcomers. A type of this marriage is pictured in the Book of **Ruth**, chapter **four**. Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redemption, so also Christ purchased His bride through the process of redemption. Ruth became Boaz’s wife automatically through this redemption and so also will the bride. The ones chosen out from among the Church who will be found worthy to inherit the kingdom will automatically become the bride of Christ. Following this redemptive process, the wedding festivities of Christ and His bride will occur in the kingdom of heaven. This can be seen in **Revelation 19:7-9**:

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

In the same manner that Ruth had to prepare and make herself ready for Boaz, so also will the bride have to prepare to meet Christ at His Judgment Seat in order to qualify as His bride. Preparation for meeting Christ at His judgment seat can be seen in **Ruth 3:3**, where she is instructed to *wash thyself...anoint thyself...put on your best garment*. The confession and putting away of sins, abiding in the Spirit, and living righteously through faith in Christ till the end will grant us to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright (*the righteous acts of the saints*), at the wedding festivities of our King.

ONE TAKEN, THE OTHER LEFT

In **Mathew 24:3**, the disciples had approached Jesus privately, asking what will be the sign of His second coming and of the end of the age. And the reason that Jesus wanted them to know the signs of His coming was so that “*no one deceives you*” -- because of false Christs and false prophets. He revealed the signs of the Tribulation, followed by the Great Tribulation, and His second coming in **Matthew 24:27**.

Then, in **Mathew 24:36-44**, Jesus presents a picture of Christians who, after their rapture, standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ, will either be “taken” [alongside Christ] or “left” [turned away]. *In this parable, the issue of Christian preparedness for His second coming and the Millennial kingdom is in view*. Just as in the days of Noah, many will not be prepared for Christ and His kingdom. In **Matthew 24:38, 39**, Jesus revealed that before the Flood many were *eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage* (not focusing on Christ), *until the Flood came, and took them all away*. And this will be the exact occurrence at the end of this age. Many Christians who were not watching (preparing) for the Lord during their lifetime will be “left” [turned away], and will lose their life in the age to come. The few who were watching (preparing) during their lifetime will be “taken” [alongside Christ] in the heavenly kingdom as His intimate companion.

“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Matthew 24:40-42)

Many within Christendom refer this passage to the rapture (saved will be

taken to heaven, unsaved will be left on earth), however this cannot be. Jesus is speaking *only* to Christians, warning them to be prepared for His coming. And this does not refer to a selective rapture, as God deals with all Christians at the same time. *All* Christians will be removed to the Judgment seat of Christ in heaven (**2 Corinthians 5:10**) at the same time (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**). In addition, this parable concerns the Messianic Era, not the Eternal Ages. Unsaved individuals do not and cannot prepare for Christ, for their spirits are dead. Only believers, the saved, are able to prepare (by and through the Holy Spirit) for His second coming. But *many* Christians will not be prepared to meet the Lord at His judgment seat on that Day. Consequently, they will be “left” [Greek: *turned away*]. Only the faithful Christians who have prepared with good works will be “taken” [Greek: *received alongside* Christ] in the kingdom.

FAITHFUL SERVANT AND THE EVIL SERVANT

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 24:45-51)

Jesus gave ample warnings but indicated that no man will know the exact day and hour of His return, so all must be ready. Immediately following this discussion of readiness, the parable of the faithful servant and the evil servant was emitted. As in the previous parable of the wedding feast, this parable also reveals the “chosen (called out) from the called,” except that it expounds on the requirements needed to inherit the future kingdom, as well as the consequence for being unprepared.

The “faithful and wise servant” is a mature Christian, one who has the “*epignosis*” or higher knowledge of the Word of God as it pertains to the

message of the kingdom. The master, who is Christ Jesus, is seeking this faithful and wise servant to make him ruler over His household, the household of believers. This faithful and wise servant is to give “food” to His household in “due season,” which is the time just before the return of the Lord. Jesus begins this parable with a question which denotes a negative answer, knowing that His search will result in very few qualified individuals. To qualify, one must have the higher knowledge (*epignosis*) of the Word and be faithful in ministering this knowledge to other Christians until death or rapture. Who will give the food, the meat? The majority of the modern day pastors and teachers of the Church will not qualify. They only know and offer “milk” to their congregation, week after week. Sadly, the Church is kept as “babes” in Christ, never growing or understanding the knowledge of the truth, thereby never anticipating or preparing for the “blessed hope” of Christ’s return and the coming kingdom.

This same parable, the faithful servant and the evil servant, given in **Luke 12:41-48** refers to the servant as a faithful and wise “steward.” The Greek translation (Strong’s #G3623) for “steward” is “house-distributor; manager, overseer.” Therefore, mature Christians are to distribute the knowledge of the kingdom to the house of believers, i.e. the Church. In **1 Corinthians 4:1, 2**, reference is made to the “stewards of the mysteries of God:”

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

As stewards, mature believers are *required* to manage the message and ministry of the Word of the kingdom, a message in which God has entrusted to them. This includes pastors, teachers, and ministers within the Church. But this does not exempt all other Christians from spreading the Word of the kingdom, for *all believers* are required to be found faithful in this work and service for Christ in whatever capacity God has given them.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to

observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

When Christ returns, those who are found faithful with the ministry of the Word of the kingdom (the food, the meat) will be blessed--- *“he will make him ruler over all his goods.”* This pertains to the heavenly inheritance of the kingdom — ruling and reigning with Christ during the Messianic Era.

The consequence for not abiding as faithful and wise servants will result in loss of the inheritance. We see this presented with the “evil servant,” still God’s servant meaning he is a saved individual, but is a carnal or apostate Christian. This Christian, as in the parable of the wedding feast, makes light of Christ’s return and rejects it altogether.

A comparison Scripture of **Matthew 24:48**, *“My master is delaying His coming,”* can be found in **2 Peter 3:3, 4**, which centers on false teachers:

“...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’”

It is evident in the evil servant’s life that he cares not for Christ. He is an apostate teacher, speaking against Christ’s return. He lives for the world, the flesh and the devil as he *“begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ... therefore, ...the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of...” (Matthew 24:49)*

This is similar to the previous parable, the parable of the wedding feast in **Matthew 22:5, 6**:

“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.”

For those evil servants who ignore the return of Christ and speak against it, He will come as *“a thief in the night”* and their judgment will result in great remorse, as they will suffer the greatest loss ever imaginable. Christ *“will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.”*

This loss refers to a division between soul and spirit, as the non-overcomer will be separated from Christ and will lose his soul in the age to come. “*His portion*” meaning “his position” will be appointed with the hypocrites outside of the kingdom. This parable warns Christians that judgment will be carried out at the Judgment seat of Christ and although the unfaithful will want to inherit the blessing, they will be rejected. Like Esau, they will seek repentance with “*weeping and gnashing of teeth,*” but they will find none from their Lord (**Hebrews 12:16, 17**).

We have learned two of the requirements for entering the kingdom of heaven yet future: first is to move on to maturity, possessing the higher knowledge of the Word (the Word of the kingdom) and second is to produce fruit for the kingdom. As stewards of His Word, we are to minister this kingdom message to other Christians until the end. If we anticipate the “blessed hope” of His return and of entering the kingdom, as the Spirit leads us, we will be strong and dedicated in pursuing this service for Christ. In addition, with this higher knowledge, God reveals the signs of the near time of His return, so that to us, He does not come as a thief:

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6)

PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise

answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Matthew 25:1-13)

As in the parable of the faithful servant and the evil servant, this parable depicts two types of Christians, those who are wise and those who are foolish. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins begins with *"the kingdom of heaven shall be likened"* therefore; the Messianic Kingdom is in view. This parable is a pictorial representation of the removal of all Christians from earth to heaven, to the Judgment Seat of Christ. "Ten" virgins represent *all* virgins, as the number ten is the Biblical number for "ordinal perfection." And they were all "virgins," meaning all Christians.

The foolish virgins had only one portion of oil in their lamps, but the wise had a double portion of oil — one in their lamps and the other portion in their vessels. "Oil" in Scripture denotes the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the single portion of oil in the lamps speaks of the Holy Spirit which is freely given to all ten virgins the moment they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

The single portion of oil thereby signifies the receiving of the Holy Spirit upon acknowledging our belief in the Lord. Through the Holy Spirit, we now are able to mature in the Word of God and produce fruit --- in preparation to meet our Bridegroom. In this parable, maturity in the Word and preparedness for Christ is known as having a double portion of oil, which only the wise virgins possessed. The foolish virgins never went beyond the single portion of oil, the Holy Spirit remaining dormant in

them, and therefore never progressed unto maturity or produced any fruit for the kingdom. This is similar to the parable of the wedding feast, in that only the wedding guests who were prepared and possessed a wedding garment (righteous acts of the saints) were allowed into the wedding feast.

Then, reference is made that all the virgins *slumbered and slept* while the bridegroom was delayed, meaning all ten servants were passing through a time of darkness in this world while the Bridegroom was away.

“Midnight” in Scripture always denotes judgment, and in this parable, a cry is heard providing a warning to be ready for judgment:

And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ (Matthew 25:6)

This pictures for us the time preceding the rapture and subsequent judgment of all Christians. It is a warning (“*midnight cry*”) for Christians to be prepared. The double portion of oil that the wise virgins possessed had to be purchased by the One selling, the Holy Spirit, in order for them to enter the wedding. This typifies the works of the believer emanated by the Holy Spirit during their lives. The double portion of oil (denoting wisdom from the Holy Spirit) involved both faith and works. They had to purchase daily from the Holy Spirit with the price of a surrendered life (dying to flesh and living in the Spirit), the price of faithful obedience to the Word of God, and the hope of His appearing.

When the ten virgins arose and began to trim their lamps, the foolish virgins did not have enough oil and were told to go buy for themselves. But it was too late, for only the wise virgins who were prepared were allowed to go in with Him to the wedding as the bride of Christ. *And the door was shut* — speaks of being shut out of the kingdom. Afterwards, the foolish virgins cried out repeatedly to the Lord to open the door.

But he answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” (Matthew 25:12)

A comparison to **Matthew 25:12** can be seen in **Matthew 7:21** during the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus began speaking to the multitudes, saying:

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

Only believers call Christ, "Lord," therefore it cannot be said that these were unsaved individuals. The meaning "I never knew you" refers to those Christians who were not faithfully obedient to the Lord. The Lord never knew them as faithful believers, faithful to His Word. Many think they know the Lord and can achieve salvation on their own merit and self-work, rather than abiding in Christ and producing works emanated by the Holy Spirit. This is referenced in **1 John 2:3-6**:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Another similar example to this parable is noted in **Luke 13:24-30** when Jesus was teaching the way to the kingdom to the surrounding cities of Jerusalem:

And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, "I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west,

from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Once a believer has been judged and found unworthy at the Judgment Seat of Christ, his soul-life will be separated from Christ for one thousand years. The door of opportunity to respond to Christ is closed and access into His presence cannot be permitted.

The Word of God provides ample warnings concerning our future judgment, as seen recorded in **Hebrews 10:26-31**:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries...For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Fear Him, heed His call and be prepared!

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them. His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
(Matthew 25:14-30)

The parable of the talents has to do with fruit-bearing and judgment relative to the kingdom of the heavens. This parable covers a time period of two thousand years, from Christ's ascension to the Judgment Seat of Christ. It provides a complete word-picture of the events surrounding the Judgment seat of Christ. The man traveling into a far country is Christ. Before He left, He called three of His servants (Christians) and gave to them His goods.

This parable reveals the different portions of business that Christ has entrusted to His servants when He delivered His goods. The Greek word for “goods” is *huparchonta*, meaning his “personal possessions.” What are Christ’s personal possessions? We know that “*the Lord is the Spirit*” (2 Corinthians 3:17) “*and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts*” (Galatians 4:6). The gifts of the Holy Spirit and His Word are His personal possessions.

The gift of the *indwelling* Holy Spirit is bestowed upon *all* Christians, but the portions of gifts depends on what the Lord entrusts each individual — “*according to his own ability.*” These gifts are revealed in **Romans 12:6**, **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**, **Ephesians 4:7** and are for the purpose of producing good works (fruit for the kingdom). The basis of the servant’s judgment was dependent on their increase of that which was entrusted to them.

Without the Spirit, we can do nothing --- our works are worthless to the Lord. But allowing the Spirit to work through us, we can do all things in Christ Jesus. The Lord gives each believer different gifts of the Holy Spirit for good works as He wills:

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:6)

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues (languages), to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things,

distributing to each one individually as He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

Through the free gift of the Holy Spirit, believers have an opportunity to do good works for Christ's kingdom during their lifetime. A major point which has to be taken into consideration today when viewing the topic of "gifts of the Holy Spirit," specifically in connection to the *gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy and tongues*, is that *these* signs, wonders, and miracles have to do with Israel relative to the offer of the kingdom of the heavens in order for them to exist. These specific gifts were performed by Christ and His disciples throughout the offer and the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel. And once Israel was set aside as a nation and were no longer offered the Word of the kingdom, these signs, wonders, and miracles stopped and no longer existed. However, the remaining gifts continue to be entrusted to Christians for the purpose of producing fruit, and can only be accomplished by first obtaining the "higher knowledge" of the Word.

In this parable, all three servants were saved, since the Lord called them "*his own servants.*" All three servants were given different amounts of gifts, according to each servant's personal abilities. Then the Lord journeyed to heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, to prepare a kingdom. The first servant received five talents, the second servant received two, and the third servant received one talent. The first two servants went and were fruit-bearing using the gifts they were given for good works --- to increase the kingdom of heaven.

This example portrays our required stewardship for Christ. We must utilize the gifts that we are given to mature in His Word in order to produce fruit for the kingdom. This can be done in a multitude of ways --- in ministry, to spread the Word of the kingdom; in Bible study; in teaching; in tithing to the Church; in exhorting others, etc.

The first two servants doubled their amount of talents whereas the third servant did nothing with the talent or gift he was entrusted. Rather, he hid his talent, producing no fruit for the kingdom.

At the end of the dispensation, Christ will return for His servants and remove them to heaven, to the Judgment Seat of Christ, so that each one can give an account of their works to Him. This will occur immediately

after the rapture and resurrection of the Church. Do you recall the reenactment of the Judgment Seat of Christ with the servant Brave Heart in the beginning of this book? He had produced good works for the building of the kingdom and therefore was able to enter in. Likewise, these two servants who produced fruit were standing in front of the throne and were told,

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matthew 25:21)

The third servant had a different fate awaiting him at the Judgment Seat. He was lazy and unfaithful, but made the excuse that the reason he did nothing was because he feared the Lord. The Lord corrected him because if he really had feared his Master, he would have at least deposited the money in the bank. In other words, he should have entrusted the Holy Spirit with his talent. This servant was a Christian who did not do what the Lord commanded him to do, which is, *“occupy till I come.”* He not only ignored the Lord’s will, but also sought diligently to talk his way out of judgment.

And because this servant knew his Master’s will and did nothing, the Lord rebuked him, calling him a *“wicked and lazy servant.”* His talent (gift from the Holy Spirit) was taken away and given to the overcomer. He lost his soul and he was cast into outer darkness for 1000 years; darkness outside of the kingdom. This was far worse than any judgment ever experienced on earth and caused the disapproved Christian to weep, wail and gnash his teeth with utter regret and deep grief.

PARABLE OF THE MINAS (Pounds)

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us’.

And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the

money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him 'You also be over five cities.'

Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

And he said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'" (Luke 19:12-27)

The parable of the minas (pounds) and the parable of the talents depict God's dealings with Christians throughout this dispensation until the Judgment Seat of Christ with fruit-bearing in view. These parables deal with millennial verities, the 1000 year reign of Christ, as revealed in its beginning phrase, "For the kingdom of heaven is like..." In the parable of the minas, the man traveling to a far country (heaven) is Christ. Before he left, he called *ten* of his servants (the number "10" showing "ordinal completion" and means "all" in Scripture) and delivered *ten* of the minas (all of His goods), one mina to each servant.

In this parable, the "certain nobleman" is Christ who is preparing a kingdom and will return for His servants.

“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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (John 14:2a-4)

All of the servants were entrusted with the same amount, with one mina, which is the Holy Spirit. The mina represents the “milk” doctrines, or the “gospel of grace.” The servants were judged strictly on the basis of their use of the minas during the absence of the Lord. Therefore, all believers are given and entrusted with the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to bring them to maturity in the Word, from the “milk” to the “meat” doctrines (the “meat doctrine” is the higher knowledge of the Word surrounding the second coming of Christ, or the “gospel of glory”). The basis of judgment lies on whether the servants use the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (by and through the study of the Word) and allow the Spirit to lead them unto good works (requiring faithful obedience to the Word). This parable reveals the overall scope of both the Lord’s servants and the Lord’s business — *“Do business till I come”*.

“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you...However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16:7, 13)

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire (during the kingdom age) and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (John 15:7, 8)

Both parables provide examples concerning “dividends” on the Lord’s investment, the investment being the Lord’s goods to all His servants. They were to *“occupy till I come.”* In other words, they were to trade the goods that the Lord gave them in order to produce a profit. They were to produce good works during the present day with the goods (Holy Spirit and the Word) that the Lord gave them and then account for their works when the Lord returns.

In the parable of the minas, all of the servants had gained by trading and some had gained more than others, except one. The first servant gained ten minas, and therefore was rewarded with ruling over ten cities. The

second servant gained five minas, and was rewarded with ruling over five cities. Therefore, each servant was rewarded the exact measure to which they had profited by trading. And this example clearly shows that some Christians will be awarded higher positions than others during the Millennial reign of Christ.

In like manner, there will be some Christians who will be awarded a more severe punishment than others. The last servant mentioned in this parable had not produced a profit. The unfaithful servant's excuse for "putting away the mina in a handkerchief" reflects a negative view of the nobleman. If the servant had really feared the master, he would have done something with the mina. As it was, the servant failed to obey the nobleman or even to understand him. Because of this, the mina (Lord's Spirit) was taken away from him resulting in loss of reward. And the "citizens" who did not want the nobleman to reign over them were slain, considered enemies of the master. These "citizens" represent those who not only ignore the Lord's will, but who publicly reject the Lord — they are apostates and false teachers.

In both parables, the central message is "faithful obedience" to the business which the Lord has entrusted, with a view to His return and His kingdom to come --- *to receive for himself a kingdom and to return*. The day will come when Christ will return for His servants and "*settle accounts with them*" at His Judgment Seat. In both parables, there were different levels of rewards given dependent on the use of the Holy Spirit and the gifts entrusted. Likewise, there were different levels of loss, dependent on their lack of use of the Holy Spirit or their total rejection and falling away from the Lord.

These parables reflect a truth which will soon be realized. The basis of judgment will be "works" — not for salvation of the spirit, but rather, works executed *after* salvation of the spirit for future rewards into the kingdom, for the salvation of the soul. We have learned in these parables that it is possible for Christians to be spiritually saved and not have a single good work to account for at the Judgment Seat of Christ on that Day. For our own profit, we must yield our life in obedience to the Word of God and be determined to run the race of "the faith" with patient endurance until the end. Faithful obedience is the key to entrance into the Millennial Kingdom.

CHAPTER FIVE – PART FOUR

NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

Introduction

The central theme of the Gospels has to do with the offer of the heavenly realm of the kingdom to Israel, in which they rejected the offer and their Messiah, resulting in the crucifixion of the Lord. (**Matthew 16:21; 20:17-19; 23:37-39; 26:3-5, 14; John 19:11-16; Acts 2:22-25, 36; 3:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15; Revelation 1:7**)

Then, the Book of **Acts** brings in the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, beginning on the day of Pentecost. There were approximately two million Jews on that day hearing this message in Jerusalem from all over the world. The prophecy of Joel was partly fulfilled that day (**Joel 2:4, 16-21**) when the filling of the Holy Spirit produced signs, wonders and miracles. The apostles, through the Holy Spirit, were granted the gift of speaking in different languages (tongues) so that all of the Jews who were from different countries and spoke different languages were able to understand. This was done so that these Jews would go back to their nation and deliver the message to their people. But even though these Jews were astonished at hearing the message in their own language, they continued to have doubt.

Why the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel? The first offer was given so that the nation of Israel would repent for their sin of unbelief in the coming of their Messiah (**Matthew 4:17**); the second offer was given so that the nation of Israel would repent for crucifying their Messiah (**Acts 2:36**). Twice, the nation of Israel as a whole rejected the offer of the kingdom, which resulted in the offer being set aside and given to the Gentiles, as noted in **Acts 28:28**. This opens up the Epistles, which centers on the offer of the kingdom to the “*new creation*,” the one new man in Christ or the Church. At the inception of the Church however, the re-offer of the kingdom remained open to Israel (according to secular history, until early 63 A.D.); therefore Paul, who was called to minister the kingdom message to the Gentiles, went “*to the Jews first, then to the Greeks*.” Three recorded times during his ministry, after he had carried the kingdom message to Israel’s religious leaders, Paul experienced

rejection. The Church, however, received the message with joy, but later as the “tares” were placed within the Church by Satan, those hearing the message began to reject it and many who knew the message fell away from it.

If was after Stephen’s message was rejected and he was slain by Israel’s religious leaders that Saul (his name changed to Paul) came into the picture, which at that time was known as “the great persecutor of the Church.” On his journey to Damascus to find Jews within the synagogues and bring them back to the Sanhedrin, Christ appeared to Paul, revealing Himself to him. The appearance of Christ in glory brought about Paul’s conversion. God chose Paul to be the apostle to carry God’s message to the Gentiles. Paul immediately went forth to Damascus to preach God’s message to the Jews first, but they rejected him as well and sought to kill him. Christians in Damascus helped Paul get out of the city. Afterwards, Christ led Paul to Arabia and personally taught him the *gospel of the glories of Christ* for a period of approximately three years--- the message which he was to give to the Gentiles and which encompasses the central message of all his Epistles — the Word of the kingdom.

Paul had expressed his gratitude to God for calling him into the ministry and showing grace unto him, knowing that he was a persecutor and a blasphemer against Christians (**1 Timothy 1:12-17**). Both Peter, who was first commissioned to carry the message of the glories of Christ to the Jews, and Paul, the one to write most of the Epistles and to spread the message all over the world to the Gentiles, followed God’s commandments with faithful obedience. Paul, however, became the central person in whom God would use to write most of the Epistles to the Church. It is amazing to see that Paul’s conversion transpired at the exact time that the message of the kingdom was to be carried to the “one new man in Christ,” which was man’s conversion, neither Jew nor Greek, but a “new creation.” From that point in time, God used Paul’s conversion as a testimony to those Paul would convert, beginning with the gospel of grace and then moving on to his main ministry: the gospel of glory (the kingdom message). Paul’s teachings included *how one could be saved* (gospel of grace) and then an in-depth view of *why one had been saved* (gospel of glory).

Christ had taught and commissioned Paul in Arabia “the mystery,” an unveiling of that which was taught and hid (veiled) in Moses in the Old

Testament, which is--- “*the new creation*” being heirs with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. This is the theme of the New Testament with Christ as the center of this message.

In his Epistles, Paul referenced what he had learned from Christ in Arabia as "my gospel." The word “gospel” simply means “good news.” The entire message of Christ is the good news, both the gospel of grace and the gospel of glory, which includes the unveiling of the “mystery.”

Paul wrote most of the Epistles, covering the Books of **Romans, first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, first and second Thessalonians, first and second Timothy, Titus and Philemon**. It is interesting to note that in his Epistles Paul wrote to a total of *seven* churches, just as the Apostle John did in **Revelation** chapter **two**. The number “seven” is the biblical number for “completeness of that which is in view.” As we go forth into the Epistles, let us keep in mind that the central theme is the offer of the kingdom of the heavens given to the *complete* Church, i.e. *all* Christians, and that the salvation of the soul is in view, not salvation of the spirit. Throughout the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, faithful obedience to God’s Word is the main prerequisite in order to become the bride of Christ in the future Millennial kingdom.

SECTION 1 — ROMANS TO EPHESIANS

The Epistle to the Romans

In the Book of **Romans**, Paul began with the aspect of salvation as it applies to the past, present and future tense — from faith to faith.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”
(Romans 1:16, 17)

The Word reveals that the foundation of God’s comprehensive plan of salvation (spirit, soul, and body) for man is based upon a position of *faith*, from beginning to end. An individual must come to the understanding that

he cannot achieve the “*righteousness of God*” on his own, i.e., on his self-effort or self-worth. The individual who has exercised faith in Christ, *a one-time willful decision* that secures for him the “*righteousness of God,*” the possession of which guarantees him eternal life spirit-salvation, should also understand that his *continuing* soul-salvation may only be achieved by works of righteousness that emanate from a position of faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Christians who live by faith, obedient to the gospel of Christ, are being qualified for the salvation of their souls. If one allows, his faith will grow “*from faith to faith*” meaning unto maturity; his eyes of understanding will be opened so that “*the deep things of God*” are revealed to him.

Salvation of the Spirit is a past act of Christ at Calvary — requiring only our belief in Him (**Ephesians 2:8**); salvation of the soul is a present act — requiring good works according to the Spirit, but not realized until a future time (**2 Corinthians 2:15**); and salvation of the body is a future act --- requiring a test of the believer’s works (works performed during the believer’s lifetime) at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**Romans 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23**).

The writers of the New Testament, referring to things surrounding a future salvation, used the expressions “the faith,” “the gospel” [of Christ; of glory], “my gospel,” “the saving of the soul” and the “the blessed hope.” These expressions are referring to things surrounding the same salvation--- the salvation of the soul, with millennial verities in view. These expressions are never used in Scripture after the fashion in which it is often used in Christendom — associating the salvation of the soul with one’s presently possessed eternal salvation (salvation of the spirit). Thus, “*the faith*” was a commonly used expression seen throughout the New Testament to refer to teachings surrounding the proffered kingdom. In each case, “the faith” is articular in the Greek text, so as to highlight something particular; a particular belief. Similarly, those of “the Way” (born again believers) in **Acts 19:8, 9** were those who held to “the faith” (Word of the kingdom). In the Old Testament, Moses mentioned the journey of “the Way” in **Deuteronomy 2:1**.

In **Romans 1:8b**, Paul recognized the Church in Rome in this way: “*that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*” They were born

again believers comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. The Church was growing in “the faith” and Paul wanted to exhort them to stay in this path and not cause division amongst themselves because they were of both Jews and Gentiles. According to the gospel Paul preached, he made them aware that together they have all sinned, but through the righteousness of faith in Jesus Christ, all are justified.

Because of the promise granted through faith and not the law, Christians are heirs to the kingdom of heaven. If we live according to the Spirit and not the flesh, we will inherit the kingdom in the age to come. Paul explained that Christians are not saved by the law. Why? Christians are not saved by the law because their sinful flesh cannot keep from sinning. For this reason, Christ died and took on all the sins of the world. He left us the Spirit, so that we can choose to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. If we are led by the Spirit through faith, we are made righteous, we are justified. **(Acts 13:38, 39)**

The law was not created for salvation or to obtain righteousness. The Law of Moses was created for the ungodly, for those who lived in the flesh and continually sinned against God. The Law was not given to justify sinners but to expose sin.

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made... (Galatians 3:19) [See also 1 Corinthians 15:56]

Faith was always the substance for salvation and righteousness, as in the example of Abraham and many other Old Testament saints and prophets.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. (Romans 3:21, 22)

For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:13)

There are many today who believe that the Law of Moses will save them in the age to come, so they continue to live in bondage to the law, through the flesh. *“For as many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse,”* as God states in **Galatians 3:10-14**. They are cursed because as long as they choose the law over Christ, they will be held to the whole law, even though all fall short of the law’s standards. The only way that they can be saved from death in the age to come, is to have faith in Jesus Christ, who took our sin. If we live by faith, according to the Spirit, we practice righteousness and put away sin. (**Galatians 3:2-7**)

The *law* cannot take away our sins, only Christ was able to do this through His death and shed blood. The sacrificial offerings presented to the Lord by the Levitical priests in the Old Testament were done only to *cover* sin, not to wipe it away completely. For those who live by the law will die by the law (**Galatians 3:19**), but those who live by *faith* will live in the age to come, for as it is written, *“the just shall live by faith.”* (**Romans 1:17b; Galatians 3:10-14**)

“But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners...”
(**1Timothy 1:8, 9**)

As Christians, we are to accept and believe that the sin-nature no longer has control over our lives and that we, allowing to be led by the Holy Spirit, may be able to live a life of holiness in Christ. Paul states that since Christians are no longer *“under law but under grace,”* they can choose to be slaves to the sin-nature which leads to death in the age to come; or they can choose to be slaves of righteousness (obedience to the faith) which leads to age-lasting life.

Since Christ died for our sins and resurrected so that we may have age-lasting life, we are debtors to Him. Because we are “in Christ,” we have the opportunity to be “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” *if*, and this is where conditions are placed, *if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together* (**Romans 8:17**). Christ suffered in order to gain His inheritance; we too must suffer with Him in order to gain our inheritance. If one is following Christ, suffering is inevitable, because he is not conformed to this world, but is set apart. Therefore, the flesh, the world and the devil seeks to attack him.

How can one win? How can one overcome?

“...if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:13)

Being led by the Spirit means allowing Christ to transform us from within, which brings about a change in our hearts and minds; whereas walking in the flesh means going by our own fleshly acts and thoughts, bringing about no change within.

What motivates us to live according to the Spirit and to overcome our sufferings? The motivating factor is the blessed hope of Christ's return and the hope of becoming co-heirs in His kingdom. Paul referred to it as this:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

No matter what the sufferings are, if we do not lose heart, nothing can separate us from the love of God. The Day will come when He will redeem us and be with us forever. Paul referred to our present sufferings as “light afflictions” (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**), compared to the glory that will be revealed to us in the age to come.

Only by studying and maturing in the Word of God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can one renew his mind and ultimately transform like Christ --- holy and set apart for good works.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1, 2)

What do some of these “good works” look like?

“Having then gifts (by the Holy Spirit) differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

(Romans 2:6- 8)

Ministry means “service” and is in contrast to the gift of speaking to others:

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10, 11)

Stewards are managers who will be held accountable for using their gift in the best interest of the One who gave it to them. Not relying on their own strength, stewards should use the power of the Holy Spirit which God gave them to do His will.

Paul spoke concerning his desire for Israel to be saved (**Romans 10:1**). Because they seek to establish their own righteousness, they are ignorant of God’s righteousness and therefore have not submitted to God. And because of the hardness of their hearts and their own self-righteousness, they rejected the Gospel of the kingdom and their Messiah.

Before Christ’s sacrificial death, Jews could be looked upon as [eternally] saved, otherwise they would not have been offered the heavenly inheritance. However, after Christ’s death on the Cross, the “new creation in Christ” was born. Many Jews who placed their belief in Christ were now part of the “new creation.” But today, Jews and Gentiles who do not place their belief in Christ are not [eternally] saved. Only the body of Christ, i.e. the Church, is [eternally] saved and being offered the heavenly inheritance (Millennial life).

The Olive Tree

Romans 11:11-32

The context of **Romans 11:11-32** concerns Israel and “the Gospel” (of the inheritance, of the heavenly kingdom) of which national Israel rejected (**Romans 10:1-4, 14-21**).

The Olive Tree – National Israel:

Firstfruits – Old Testament Saints

Lump – 12 sons of Jacob

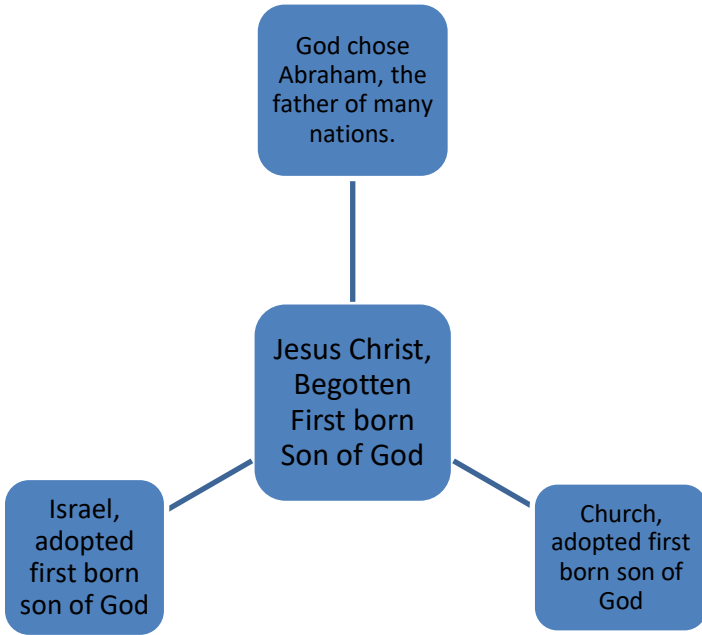
Root – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Branches – Descendants

Because of unbelief to Christ and the inheritance, “some” of the branches (Israel’s descendants) were cut off (from the Gospel, the heavenly inheritance). Therefore, Gentiles were “grafted in” to the lineage of Abraham “through Christ” (a spiritual “grafting”) in order to have access to the covenant of the inheritance. Gentiles were now given the offer (Gospel) of the inheritance, because they believed (**Acts 28:28**). This simply refers to the Gentiles privileged to receive spiritual blessings via the covenant which God made with Abraham through faith. Only through Israel will all the other nations be blessed (**Romans 11:18; cf Genesis 12:3**).

In **Romans 11:23**, reference is given that not only Gentiles will be grafted in and given the offer, but Jews will also be “grafted in” again when Christ returns, if they believe. And this is the “mystery,” that Israel is presently cut off due to blindness and unbelief until the end of the age (**Romans 11:25, 26**).

The “one new man in Christ,” i.e. the Church, is neither Jew nor Gentile but is composed of individuals from both Jew and Gentile who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, a new spiritual creation (**Colossians 3:10**).



But this does not dispose of national Israel. Israel is God's firstborn son. Israel will be dealt with again in the future and the nation as a whole will believe and be restored when Christ returns. God will never do away with any of His firstborn sons: Christ, Israel and the Church! (Romans 11:29) Three firstborn Sons, One Begotten and two adopted – all within the seed of Abraham – will exist forever.

Paul was exhorting the Christians in Rome not to be ignorant of this mystery of the kingdom as Israel was. Israel will remain in a state of blindness until the end of the Tribulation, a time of extreme persecution, which will cause Israel's eyes to be opened unto repentance. They will, at that time, call on the Lord for help and He will save them. Therefore, let us keep our eyes focused on the future kingdom of Christ, not in drunkenness, but sober, walking in His light, fully armored with the Word of God and performing divine good works. Our obedience to "the faith" is the key to His acceptance.

The Epistle to the Corinthians

Paul had left the Corinthian Church in 53 A.D. to continue his ministry with other Churches. While he was away, he had received report that the Corinthian Church was experiencing many problems, especially divisions and immorality. The Church was placing emphasis on man's wisdom rather than the wisdom of God. They were immature Christians who were not growing from the gospel of grace, but rather were self-centered, boasting upon man's wisdom and causing divisions amongst each other concerning who they should follow.

These problems of the early Church led to the divisions of many who separated and began their own denominations. Hence, we have hundreds of denominations today. This resulted in the forming of man's "religion," which was not God's intention for His church. The early Church consisted of small groups who met in homes to study and grow in the gospel of Christ. But today, importance is directed in bringing in large denominations where the pastor-teacher becomes the focus of attention. An example can be seen in many Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, where the pastor's main focus is to mesmerize believers with emotional rituals and deceiving doctrines; their destructive ways lead the Church far away from ever coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Paul detected that the Corinthian Church was under much distress, being led into different directions and placing importance on deceptive practices instead of the true message, the gospel of Christ. He then wrote the following to the Corinthian Church:

"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (1 Corinthians 1: 17-19)

Paul's ministry was to preach the gospel of Christ, the kingdom message. He warned Christians not to take lightly the message of the Cross (in

relation to the “purpose” of Christ’s death and resurrection), or they would perish in the age to come. For those who are “wise according to the flesh” are “foolish” and are already perishing, having no divine good works to their name. But to mature Christians who grow in the Gospel and heed the message of the kingdom for good works “are being saved,” that is, presently working to be counted worthy into the future kingdom by the power of God — to attain the salvation of the soul.

For this reason, God has called on the weak and humble to the kingdom and not the wise according to the flesh (man’s wisdom).

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

Those who boast in their wisdom forget that true wisdom comes only from God. Therefore, as it is written, “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 1:31). Therefore in all things we should glorify the Lord!

Paul admonishes the Corinthian Church to be humble, to seek the wisdom of God and have faith only in His power:

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of man but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:4, 5)

Being rest assured of God’s promises spoken of in the Word of God that will be made manifest by His power in the near future, we need to make sure that our faith does not rest on the wisdom of man but rather on the wisdom of God. The wisdom that Paul was teaching was the “*hidden wisdom of God*” to those who are mature.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:7, 8)

We can see how extraordinary God’s power and wisdom is in that before God created heaven and earth, before He created the angels, before He

created man or any living thing, He finished all of His plans and works --- *for our glory*. Christ's kingdom will be set up on earth and in heaven for God's firstborn sons to inherit --- it is a surety. Who are God's firstborn sons? Christ Jesus is God's only begotten Firstborn Son, Israel is God's adopted firstborn son, and the Church will be God's adopted firstborn son. So far the only firstborn Son to finish the race, overcome and be found worthy is Christ. Do we realize what is in store for those who overcome?

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9; cf Isaiah 64:4)

This is the "mystery," the hidden wisdom revealed to Paul by the Lord in Arabia. Paul was called to carry this mystery, which he referred to as the "gospel" (good news), to Christians. It had to do with the Jews and Gentiles becoming a new creation, being placed together in the same body as "joint-heirs with Christ" and possessing the hope of one day ruling and reigning in the kingdom of the heavens. This "mystery" is documented in **Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 4:1; 15:51; Ephesians 1:9; 5:32; Colossians 1:26; 1 Timothy 3:16**. God's plan from the beginning, before the ages began, was that He would be manifested in the flesh, suffer, and be received up in glory *for our sake*, so that we also, through our sufferings, may overcome and be received up in glory in the future kingdom of heaven. The "mysteries of the kingdom" concern the Church, the "one new man in Christ," being given the offer of the inheritance into the kingdom of the heavens during the Messianic Era.

But Paul made the Corinthians aware in his Epistle that they had not grown in the faith. They believed in Christ but their behavior did not line up to a righteous position in Christ. Therefore Paul could not speak or teach them the "mystery" or the mature Word of the kingdom because their carnal ways were hindering them from receiving it. Not only were they not growing in the Word, but they were also causing dissention and division amongst themselves. Paul called them "carnal" (fleshly) and not spiritual Christians. He could only feed them "milk," which is the gospel of grace, because they were living in the flesh. He could not feed them "solid food," which is the mature Word of the kingdom, the Word surrounding Christ's second return.

Paul wanted to make clear that ministers of the Word are merely God's servants --- God is the true Leader. Paul had laid the foundation, which is Christ. It is the believer's responsibility to build and mature on this foundation from the Word for good works. God will ask each and every believer to give account of his works on that Day, whether good or bad, and "each one will receive his own reward (or loss) according to his own labor."

For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear, for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire;

and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:9-15)

The basis for all judgment is *works*. Every Christian, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, will be judged on the basis of his works, works performed during the present age. Sin has already been judged at Calvary on the basis of Christ's death and shed blood. As noted in **1 Corinthians 3:9-15**, works for the kingdom can emanate from faith or without faith. The faithful workers produce fruit of *gold, silver, precious stones*, but the unfaithful workers produce *wood, hay and straw*. Therefore, it is possible to produce fruit out of faithfulness or unfaithfulness. And each will be tested through fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

A comparison Scripture to the judgment of works at the Judgment Seat of Christ can be seen in **1 Peter 1:4-9**:

...to an inheritance incorruptible...In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Paul was instructing the Corinthians not to boast in men who are wise in the flesh, but in Christ, who sent them the Holy Spirit. And Paul was exhorting the Corinthians not to go beyond the teachings of Scripture, for by doing so they would avoid the pride, divisions and immorality that were destroying their Church.

By and through the Word of God, we have everything we need to make us wise for salvation. The Word of God is the unadulterated Word, which is pure and true. We do not need man's wisdom to stray us away from the Word of God. There is nothing that needs to be added to it or taken away from it. We need only to receive the Word and study it exactly as it is, perfect and lacking nothing. The moment man begins to give his *opinion* on what the Word says, it is adulterated. Even if man speaks or writes *some* truth but mixed in with false doctrine (for example, the foundation which is Christ or the building upon it is not true) --- *it is false teaching*. Throw it away and do not adhere to it! If we continue to listen to it or read it, then it adheres in our mind and it may entice us to receive it. And if we receive it, then we have chosen to lay aside the Word of God. We need only to adhere to the truth of the Word which only comes from the Spirit.

In the following Scripture, Peter exhorts his recipients to desire only that which comes from the Word of God:

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. (1 Peter 2:1, 2)

To '*desire the pure milk of the word*' does not mean here immaturity, but to desire the pure, clean and unadulterated form of the Word like the innocence and curiosity of a newborn babe. We need to lay aside *anything* that will hinder us from receiving the knowledge of the truth, to include

any pre-conceived notions or any doctrines and traditions of man. A companion Scripture can be seen in **James 1:21**:

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Because the Corinthian Church was carnal (living according to the flesh), they were being drawn away by their own desires and thereby habitually sinning. Paul warned them of these sinful acts of sexual immorality, suing a brother and idolatry. He warned them not to keep company with brothers within the Church who were committing these sins, but to discipline them. He also instructed them to refrain from taking their disputes into the hands of pagan courts. Instead, they were to consult the Church to handle such matters.

*“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that you shall judge angels?
(1 Corinthians 6:2, 3)*

Therefore, Christians today are to handle disputes amongst each other within the house of God.

Paul then taught about the unity of marriage as it relates to the marriage of Christ. He addresses the problem of adultery and idolatry in the Corinthian Church. There were pagan temples in Corinth where they worshiped many gods formed by their ancient Greek culture. Today, pagan worship continues to be the actions of many denominations.

Paul explained that it was a violation of the believer’s union with Christ. He warns the Church to flee (“to run fast away”) from idolatry, that is, the act of worship or sacrifice to anyone or anything other than God. The armor of God must be worn at all times in order that we might be strong against others who entice us to follow their gods and their religion.

When given the opportunity, we must be faithful to spread the gospel of Christ to unfaithful Christians. If an unfaithful Christian promotes you to worship or sacrifice idols with him, do not do it for his sake. If you do worship with him, make known to him that you are worshiping the True

God, then you are not allowing evil to reign over you. By continuing to imitate Christ, you may save the unfaithful. In this respect, we are servants to all men that we may win souls in the kingdom of heaven. We therefore conform to all men, knowing that everyone is in a different area in their walk, and for the sake of the kingdom, we strive humbly to make them partakers with us and with Christ. Paul associated this with running a race and striving for a crown:

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receive the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.

Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

In order for the Church to understand, Paul drew a comparison between the Christian life and an athletic competition, specifically the Isthmian games held in Corinth. The contestants had to complete a mandatory rigorous training for a year. Those who failed to complete this training were disqualified from running the race. The same applies to Christians. First, one must prepare for their lifelong race with a clearly defined goal, that is, he must discipline his body and bring it into subjection (die to flesh) so that he will be qualified to minister to others, resulting in his qualification into the kingdom.

An example of the Christian race is pictured for us in the Book of **Ruth**. It presents a complete picture of the preparations needed for qualifying as the bride. First, Ruth made a commitment to take the journey to another land with Naomi. For the Christian, it is acknowledging through baptism to take the journey to the kingdom. Second, she was faithfully obedient to the Word, being led by Naomi, who is a type of the Scriptures. Third, she was set apart, staying close to her group of believers and working only in Boaz's field for a complete period of time. This work involved doing three things in order to be prepared to meet Boaz at his threshing floor. For the Christian, these works prepare him to meet Christ at the Judgment Seat:

- 1) Washing oneself by confessing and putting away sin;
- 2) Anointing oneself by allowing the Spirit to work through him unto maturity;
- 3) Putting on the white garment by living holy lives.

Upon doing this, one will be prepared to minister to others. Paul clarified that if he did not do these things, and he went out and preached to others, he would be disqualified. These things *must* be done continually so that we can produce fruit for Christ and His kingdom. As Paul states in **Philippians 1:27**: “*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...*” Paul clarified that the difference in the winner’s prize in the athletic games as oppose to the prize of the Christian race is that the athlete receives a crown that perishes in time, but the prize for the Christian will never perish. This should be extremely encouraging and motivating for us.

Paul exhorts us to “*run in such a way that you may obtain it.*” The Christian is to eagerly strive to produce fruit, looking forward to receiving the prize. God provides a variety of gifts to all Christians, and it is their choice whether to use them in the race of the faith. Paul knew that if he was faithful to his calling he would receive a prize from God for his service. Yet, he never assumed that he would automatically persevere to the end. He continued to discipline his body and bring it into subjection [die to flesh], and to remain faithful to his calling (**1 Corinthians 9:27; Philippians 3:12**). For Paul, this meant enduring much persecution and suffering for Christ until his death. For Christians alike, the prize or reward into the kingdom will be attained by enduring hardship and suffering for the ministry of Christ. Suffering precedes glory, which is why Paul says that we are firstborn sons “*if indeed we suffer with Him.*” Before Paul’s death, he knew he had finished the race and won the prize.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7, 8)

When we focus on Christ’s future appearing and our inheritance, we can strive to accomplish our service to Him even during much suffering. And God is faithful in providing us strength through our sufferings when we

ask for it in prayer.

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13a)

The exact opposite can occur when we do not focus on Christ's future appearing or His kingdom. This occurs when we stray away from the Word, allowing our fleshly desires and lusts over evil things to take control. Our focus becomes the things of the world and not of God. And when we are carnal, we cannot produce fruitful works for the Lord. This state of disobedience is pictured for us in Israel during their Exodus from Egypt and is written as an example for Christians. Though they believed in God and were baptized into Moses, they did not continue in the path of righteousness nor did they focus on the kingdom, therefore they continually fell into the sin of unbelief. And, as a result, most of them died in the wilderness.

Now all these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." [Israel took God's Word lightly concerning the inheritance]

Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer [Satan]. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:6-11)

We realize then that if we are to be fruitful ministers, we must be mature in the Word, being led by the Holy Spirit, and we must be holy. In **Galatians 5:22**, we are given the characteristics of the Spirit; the way in which we should minister the Word of the kingdom:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
(A companion Scripture is recorded in **2 Peter 1:5**)

When we have the knowledge and the conduct then we are prepared to spread the kingdom message. And by fulfilling the role of ministers of His Word during the present time, we will be preparing as king-priests for the coming kingdom. This relates to **James 1:22** when he said:

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Therefore, knowledge of the Word of the kingdom [hearers of the Word] and producing fruit with the characteristics of the Spirit [doers of the Word] go hand in hand.

In this Epistle, Paul reveals the greatest characteristic that God has given to man, a gift that will never perish, even when the world has been destroyed. God's gift is love; it is of God Himself, for God is love. Love is able to overcome all things. This is the kind of love that God shows to us — an unconditional, sacrificial love— “agape” love. When we die, our faith and our hope will be finished, but love will continue on forever, in the Messianic age and throughout the Eternal Ages. Love is the greatest characteristic we can possess. When we love others unconditionally during our race of the faith, then we are truly walking with God and have put on Christ.

Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthian Church pertains mostly to his testimony of his trials and tribulations. Most of his trials were attacks against his character, in which he faced slanderous accusations from among false teachers in the congregation. He reveals the problems he faced with his ministry and how he was able to endure and overcome --- only by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. He teaches us that we too can overcome our trials and sufferings for the ministry of Christ; and through our experiences we can comfort others who are suffering. Our faith in God is able to sustain us, knowing that He is our Deliverer. In **2 Corinthians 1:9, 10**, Paul refers to our deliverance in the past, present and future tense:

Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us....

Paul wanted the Church to open their eyes to the hope that he had and to the truth of his ministry.

“Unlike Moses—who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:13-18)

After Moses had been on the mountain of Sinai for forty days to wait upon God’s giving of the law, the Ten Commandments, Moses requested to see God’s glory. God granted his request, however Moses was only able to see God’s back and not His face, otherwise he would die. When Moses returned to the people of Israel, they were deeply afraid of the glory that shone on his face; therefore Moses put a veil over his face for them so that they could not see the glory. This relates to the blindness of their minds and the hardness of their hearts. Paul used this example so that the Corinthian Church would be aware of their condition, being immature in the Word of God and blinded by false teachers in their congregation. The veil they place over their hearts and minds hinders the gospel of Christ from shining in and it stops the glory from shining out. And the darkness will remain in Israel until they acknowledge Christ at His second return.

We must realize that our faith in the Word is never stagnant but is either growing (going from *‘faith to faith’*) or it is diminishing. *“Faith”* is simply believing what God says about a matter. As we study the Word of God (beholding as in a mirror), being transformed *“by the renewing of our minds”* thereby choosing to die to our flesh and walk in the Spirit, then our faith grows. We begin to “live by faith” and we go from one level of faith to a higher level of faith. As we make the progression from “faith to faith” then we shall be transformed from “glory to glory.” We are then *being saved* until that future Day at the judgment seat of Christ when we will receive our glorified bodies and our inheritance into the kingdom.

Have you ever wondered what this glory looks like? The word *glory* is translated “heavy, power, magnificence, riches and splendor” (Strong’s #3513). The glory of God is His magnificent light that will illuminate the future New Jerusalem and there will be “*no need of the sun or moon to shine in it.*” How difficult for anyone to fathom the magnitude of this very thing! Those who overcome will possess this glory during the Messianic Era. But before glory comes suffering. Paul expressed the test of our faith as a condition for acquiring the glory:

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:16-18)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ... (1 Peter 1:6, 7)

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.... (2 Corinthians 4:17)

As one beholds the mirror (the Word) with an unveiled face (believing the gospel of Christ), then he will progress from “faith to faith” (maturity in the Word of the kingdom) and “glory to glory” (process of being saved on that future Day), qualified to rule and reign with Christ. In that Day, we will see the glory of the Lord and we ourselves will be transformed into His glory, in the image and likeness of God. The question lies, “*How much glory do you want?*” Just as there are different levels of faith, there will be different levels of glory rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

But if we keep the veil over our face, then we cannot understand the Word, and therefore our faith will not grow. Paul made it clear to the Corinthian Church that this blindness comes from Satan and the outcome is death in the age to come.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe [in the gospel of glory], lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4)

The reason that some in Corinth were blinded to the truth was due to the tares who Satan had placed in the Church, tares who were preaching false messages and blinding the congregation. But Paul was there to preach the gospel of the glories of Christ as a slave to the Church for Jesus' sake. God had shown in Peter's heart "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" to them. And this is God's will for all Christians, that they mature in the gospel of glory, both in word and in deed, taking on the very image of Christ.

Peter refers to the Church as living stones, just as Christ is a Living Stone, "being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). The Church, as part of God's great spiritual building project, is called to offer spiritual sacrifices to God. What are these spiritual sacrifices?

Romans 12:1-8 reveals the spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God:

- 1) Present our bodies a living sacrifice --- holy living.
- 2) Not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind --- to be set apart and mature in God's Word.
- 3) Remove the pride and be humble in our walk with God.
- 4) Use the gift(s) given to us by the Holy Spirit, which are:
 - a. Ministry, let us use it in our ministering
 - b. Teaching
 - c. Exhorting
 - d. Giving, with liberality
 - e. Leading, with diligence
 - f. Showing mercy, with cheerfulness

These sacrifices are good works for the building of the kingdom. In **Hebrews 13:15, 16**, a similar summary of these sacrifices are presented:

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Believers are to continually offer *the fruit of our lips* which is ministering the Word of the kingdom to other believers according to the fruit of the Spirit (in love, joy, peace). The fruit of the Spirit is revealed in **Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:1-21; Colossians 3:23; 2 Peter 1:5**.

Paul's Epistle emphasized the importance of ministering the Word of the kingdom to other believers, and he was saddened that the Corinthians had not yet matured. What about ministering to the unsaved? Yes, we are to give the gospel of grace to the unsaved, which pertains strictly to the belief that Christ died for our sins. But soon after they acknowledge their belief in Christ, they are to move on to the meat of the Word. In other words, they are to continue on to maturity — the Word of the kingdom.

When Paul first went to Corinth, he found a city filled with unsaved Gentiles. Therefore, he could not begin with the message surrounding the gospel of glory; he had to first proclaim the message surrounding the gospel of grace. Paul proclaimed the good news surrounding *the grace of God* with the intention that afterwards he would then be able to proclaim the good news surrounding *the glory of Christ*.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

Paul explained to individuals *how they could be saved*, with a view to afterwards being able to explain to them *why they had been saved*. It is imperative that one receives and ministers “the gospel” in this order. God has structured His Word after a particular fashion for a reason and within this structure He has imparted His truths. The Book of **Hebrews** provides a warning to those who do not adhere to the orderly fashion of the gospel:

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those

who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection [maturity], not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 5:13-6:2)

Why are we to move on to maturity? Why are we to lay aside the doctrine of eternal judgment and of baptisms? Is there more that God wants us to know? What is the purpose of Christ dying for us and being resurrected to heaven? Why should we live holy, be set apart and be led by the Spirit? Why should we abide in the Word and be faithfully obedient? Why should we produce fruitful works? If we are eternally saved, why does the Word speak of loss? The answer to all of these questions pertains to the salvation of the soul in the age to come; the reward of the inheritance into the Millennial kingdom. This has nothing to do with our eternal salvation, but with millennial salvation, the thousand year reign of Christ.

Our eternal salvation was based strictly on our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ apart from works. But our millennial salvation requires divine good works. At the end of this age, all Christians will account for their works at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. (2 Corinthians 5:9-11)

The believer, on that Day, will either be approved or rejected. This truth should dramatically change the way we live, for our actions will be evaluated by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the reason Paul exhorts the Corinthians to live for Christ. We have been given *the ministry of reconciliation* through Christ, a ministry that reveals to believers that they

will one day in the future be reconciled to the Lord. God sent His Son to reconcile all things to Himself --- and this has not yet been manifested. Reconciliation is something yet future. Until Satan has been put down, until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ, until the bride of Christ has been revealed, until Israel has been restored, the ministry of reconciliation will continue. *Final* reconciliation, when *all* things are reconciled to God, will be after the thousand year reign of Christ.

Since God reconciled believers to Himself through the blood of Christ, we are a “new creation” in Christ and no longer should we live for ourselves, but for Him (**2 Corinthians 5:15-21**). All believers will appear before Christ to be judged on their works. Paul therefore pleads with the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain, in other words, not to live for themselves. In **2 Corinthians 5:19**, Scripture records that *God has committed to us the word of reconciliation* and **2 Corinthians 6:4** says *But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God*. We are not to take the ministry lightly nor should we allow circumstances in our lives to deter us from ministering the Word of the kingdom, even under persecution, rejection and suffering.

But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report;

as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live, as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

Paul endured through all of his sufferings by the grace and power of God. We also, as ambassadors for Christ, should follow his example, for He says, “*In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation*

I have helped you” (2 Corinthians 6:2; cf Isaiah 49:8). Now (in this dispensation) is the acceptable time to do our works of ministry; now is the time to work out our own salvation.

Paul had also addressed the topic of giving, because false teachers in Corinth were questioning Paul’s motives for ministry. They were claiming that Paul was keeping the tithes for himself. Consequently, the Corinthians had not contributed to the ministry despite their prior willingness to help. Paul then defended his integrity and gave reasons why they should give.

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

God loves a cheerful giver. Giving is like sowing seed. Knowing this, a Christian should give cheerfully for the ministry of Christ. God sees to it that the generous giver will be blessed and not suffer want; he is doing a good work unto the Lord for the building of His kingdom.

Paul was concerned for the faithfulness of the Corinthians because of their belief in these false teachers claiming to be apostles of Christ. These false teachers were not only slandering Paul, they were denying his authority. Paul’s defense to the Church was that although he had no formal training in Greek oratory or had not schooled in professional rhetoric, this does not mean he was an inadequate or an unqualified speaker. He did not lack knowledge because he had received direct training and revelation from the Lord Himself! Paul truly was an ‘apostle of Christ’ for he had been trained by Him. The false teachers had not been with Christ, therefore could not be true apostles.

Paul ended his defense by stating that if he boasted, it was done in the Lord, as oppose to the false teachers who boasted in themselves. Paul reaffirmed that in all of the sufferings that he endured he did it for the ministry of Christ. Last, God had given him visions of the Lord Jesus

Christ being raptured to Paradise, thereby moving the place of the righteous dead, Hades, to the third heaven.

Because of what Paul had witnessed and testified, He exhorted the Corinthians to examine themselves as to whether they were in “the faith.” As brothers in Christ, he wanted them to test themselves and to be established in Christ. Finally, he prayed that they would be complete, mature, lacking nothing.

When we are mature in the Word and are walking in the Spirit, we are strong to remain faithful. But when we are immature in the Word and walking according to our fleshly desires, we can easily be swayed, even to reject the message of Christ. An example of this very thing given to us in the Word is with the nation of Israel. At Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), the Jews were yelling ‘*Hosanna!* (meaning “Oh Save!”) *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!*” (**John 12:13**). Israel knew Jesus was the Son of David, the coming Messiah, yet they had not matured. Afterwards, the false teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees swayed them to fall back and reject Christ (**Matthew 27:20**). These same Jews, who had praised Jesus at His first coming, killed Him yelling, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” (**Luke 23:21**). And *the chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”* (**John 19:15b**)

Are we any different today? Unfortunately, we are not. Many Church leaders today reject Christ when they reject His message of His second coming and His literal millennial kingdom to come, leading the sheep astray. Yet how many Christians today want to hear the kingdom message? Sadly, it is very, very few. It is a shame to see that a majority of Christians are no different than the Jews were back then.

What happened to Israel after they rejected and crucified Christ? God destroyed most of them, their city and their temple in 70 AD, the rest were driven out of their land and scattered amongst the Gentile nations. The offer of the heavenly kingdom was then set aside and given to the Church. Knowing this, what do you think He will do to believers who reject Him and His message today? The Word is clear. Christ will reject *them*. They will be cast out of the kingdom, separated from Christ for one thousand years. Therefore, we must be determined to stay strong in the Word, being cautious of false teachers in the Church who sway believers to reject the

gospel of Christ. And even if they reject only part of the gospel, they reject Christ altogether.

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have [hold fast to; devote oneself to] God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.” (2 John 7-11)

The “doctrine of Christ” encompasses all that Christ taught at His first coming, and all that He received from God the Father. Christ is coming in the flesh for the second time — apart from sin (having wiped away sin at Calvary) but for salvation, that is, not for Spirit Salvation (our eternal salvation already secure) but for soul salvation (our inheritance into the Millennial kingdom).

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Hebrews 9:27, 28)

Loving God means supporting the whole gospel of Christ and standing away from those who reject it. Loving God means loving others, abiding in His Word and ministering His message surrounding the Word of the kingdom as good servants. We are not to concern ourselves with those who reject the message, but we are to humbly ‘shake off the dust from our feet’ and move on. We can be sure that many will speak evil of us, just as they spoke evil of Christ when He ministered the kingdom message. But we must endure, for how do we know that we will not save a soul into the kingdom? And if this is the will of God, should we not obey Him? We

must continually look at ourselves and not lose faith. We must endure through Christ!

The Epistle to the Galatians

Paul became aware of a perversion of the gospel of glory (the good news surrounding the message of the kingdom) that was actively deterring the Churches of Galatia away from the Truth. There were false teachers, primarily Jews, who were advocating salvation by “works of the law.” These false teachers were placing emphasis on Jewish practices, specifically the Jewish rite of circumcision. In the early years of the Church the majority of those who became Christians were by birth Jews, who were very familiar with the ritual and practice of the tabernacle. Yet in **Hebrews 9:6-12**, we see that these practices were only “*symbolic for the present time.*” And that which was symbolic could not “*make him who performed the service perfect in regard to conscience.*” The performance of religious rituals for its own sake (legalism) is quite useless in respect to it being accepted as righteousness. These laws and rituals in the Old Testament were meant as a “sign” for the Jews, pointing to a future fulfillment. It was imposed only until the time of reformation – these things having been fulfilled in Christ.

Paul's letter to the Galatians was an attempt to bring the Church back to the correct gospel and to counter the false message, a distortion of the gospel of Christ. First Paul had to reassert his authority as an apostle of Christ, proving that his message of the gospel was the true message as it was taught to him by Christ Himself. Paul had personally taught the Church just previous to these false teachers, therefore Paul referenced them as his "little children in the faith" as they were still new to the understanding of the gospel.

Paul emphasized to the Church that there was only one gospel of Christ and if anyone preached any other gospel besides what he had taught them, then “*let him be accursed.*” By calling these false teachers accursed, Paul made it clear that they would undergo a stricter judgment from Christ. *Pastors and teachers possess a greater influence over Christians and with that require greater responsibility, as they are representing His Word.* Pastors and teachers who refrain from feeding their sheep as well as those who influence the sheep to reject Christ and His message of the

coming kingdom will have to face a stricter judgment at the Judgment seat of Christ.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect [mature] man, able also to bridle the whole body...Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. (James 3:1, 2, 5)

When we preach according to man's wisdom, we allow the sin nature to inspire false and evil words beyond our control. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit within us can we bring these destructive words under control. When one has the full knowledge of the gospel of Christ, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide him, then he is able to preach in spirit and in truth. Otherwise, he will speak according to the flesh, bringing others to follow his false word and destructive path.

This was the case with the false teachers among the Church in Galatia. The Galatians were on the verge of becoming enslaved to the law because of them. As an example, Paul explained to the Church what had happened fourteen years following his conversion when he went back to Jerusalem to preach the gospel. False teachers were brought in amongst them then, who were teaching Jews and Gentiles about the law of circumcision. Paul, as the apostle for the uncircumcised (Gentiles), was to go and preach to the Gentiles, and Peter, commissioned to preach the Gospel to the circumcised (Jews) was to go and preach to the Jews. But when Peter went to preach to the Jews in Antioch, he withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles in front of the Jews, because he feared the false teachers. When the rest of the Jews who were with Peter, including Barnabas, saw this they too refrained from eating with the Gentiles. Peter's hypocritical example implied that Gentiles had to behave like Jews in order to receive salvation. And this hypocrisy was received because of the false teachers that they feared. Paul, defending the gospel, exposed Peter in front of everyone saying,

If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" ...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." (Galatians 2:14c-21)

This event was the exact situation that was leading the Galatians away from the truth. Paul called them *O foolish Galatians!* and said to them,

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith'. (Galatians 3:1-11)

The Greek word for “foolish” is *anoetos* (Strong’s #G453) meaning “unintelligent or stupid.” The Galatians were unwise according to God’s Word, particularly the spiritual lessons regarding the purpose of Christ’s death. Faith in Christ (abiding in the Spirit) replaces the law (according to the flesh; fleshly works). Yet, as long as there is sin in the world the law will remain until the end of the Millennium in order to expose sin. **(Matthew 5:17, 18)**. But faithful Christians are to look to Christ, to be transformed from within.

The false belief that works of the law must be adhered to for salvation and righteousness is prominent in the Jewish and Christian community today. There are Jews (by birth) who have become Christians who are led away from the truth and return to the law. There are Christians who are not Jews who are also entangled in this false message, being taught that they must be like the Jews and follow the law in order to obtain righteousness and be saved. Many of these Christians call themselves, “Messianic Jews,” which has no foundation in God’s Word. This title goes against Scripture, for there are only three creative acts of God: Israel, Gentiles and the Church. Like the Galatians, Christians today are being tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine to include these Jewish legalistic messages, taught within the “Jewish Roots Movement” cult. Yet the Word clearly teaches that *faith* is the only substance for salvation and righteousness.

Paul strengthened his defense of the Gospel by recalling God's promise to Abraham and his seed that was made four hundred and thirty years before the Law of Moses was enacted. (**Galatians 3:17, 18**) And God's promises are never annulled. God's covenant with Abraham was made because of his *faithful obedience* to God (**Hebrews 11:17**). This has not and will not change. And because we are in Christ, we also are part of the seed of Abraham, as first-born *adopted* sons. There is no Scriptural basis that the Law of Moses was the fulfillment of the covenant made to Abraham for the inheritance. This is man's way of adding to or taking away from the Word of God. *The Law of Moses was added after God's promise to Abraham to clarify the issue of sin until Christ the Seed came.* Christ's death and shed blood not only covered sin, but took away the sins of the world.

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (Galatians 3:19-24)

Christ's death and shed blood took away our sins and redeemed us from the Law; and His resurrection allowed us to be heirs with Him. Through faith in Christ, we are considered Abraham's seed, grafted in as adopted sons of God and heirs to the inheritance.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Galatians 4:6, 7)

All Christians are considered to be one "in Christ" as part of the body of Christ. But those who allow the Spirit of Christ to work through them for good works, awaiting that future Day, are mature and complete. Not only are they "in Christ" but "*Christ is in you.*" The Scriptures in **Galatians 4:6** and **Colossians 1:27** provide reference to this very thing:

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. (Galatians 4:9, 10)

After Christians have come to know God and the magnitude of His promise, it is shameful how easily it is for some to stray away and be entangled again in man's wisdom. A proper understanding of the purpose of "Christ's death and shed blood" will clearly show that the laws, regulations, feasts, Sabbaths, celebrations and sacrifices no longer apply for the atonement of sin and for pleasing God (**Galatians 4:9-11**)--- only *faith* in Christ, who took away our sins by His blood, is pleasing to the Lord. Because of Christ, believers no longer live in bondage to the law and no longer are slaves to sin. The feasts were given to Israel as a "sign," which pointed to a future Day, in order that they would keep it ever in their minds. (**Exodus 31:12, 13**)

Paul gave the Galatians the example of Sarah (the freewoman), Abraham's wife; and Hagar, the bondwoman. God had given Sarah and Abraham a son, Isaac, who was the child of promise. Ishmael, born from the bondwoman Hagar and Abraham, was born according to the flesh.

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free". (Galatians 4:30, 31)

Isaac, the son of promise, is a type of Christ, the Son and Seed of promise, and through Him we are children of the freewoman. The law was our bondage, but Christ set us free from it. Yet Jews and Christians continue to seek the law to obtain righteousness and salvation, performing works according to their flesh. Only works done according to the Spirit through faith are qualified for righteousness and salvation.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be

justified by the law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Galatians 5:4, 5)

Christ paid the price to give us freedom from the law, the Law of Moses. When we entangle ourselves in the law, we are denying Christ and His works. By sending us the Holy Spirit, Christ gave us the ability to choose to live holy lives and put away sin. We can do nothing in the flesh, but we can do all things in the Spirit. In the Spirit, we can abide in all of God's commandments. And we have Christ acting as our High Priest, presently in the order of Aaron. When we do sin, we are to confess our sins to Him and He will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**).

In what manner are we able to put away sin? Paul tells us by “walking in the Spirit:”

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22)

The desires of our flesh are always at odds with what the Holy Spirit desires. The only way to fight off the flesh is through the Spirit. In **Galatians 5:19**, the “works of the flesh” are revealed and those who practice these works will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But when we put on the fruit of the Spirit, we are able have victory over sin. We also are able to restore another Christian from the bondage of sin. When we act according to the Spirit — in love, kindness, and gentleness — we can show our brethren how they too can be free from burdensome sin. Through the ministry of the gospel and the characteristics of the Spirit, one may be able to win souls and turn them from the error of their ways.

In addition, we are to give cheerfully to those who teach the gospel of Christ in order to grow His spiritual house, Christ's future kingdom. Last, Paul tells the Galatians *not to grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:9, 10)*

We must strive to be on the path of righteousness by walking in the Spirit, performing good works for the ministry of Christ so that on the Day of the Lord we will be rewarded. Paul exhorts Christians to do good to all but *especially* to the household of “the faith.”

Why do you think Jesus in His last 40 days on earth taught believers the Word of the kingdom instead of giving the gospel of grace to the unsaved? Christ wanted to make sure that His people would carry this message of the kingdom to all nations. Therefore, our priority is to build God's spiritual house by carrying the message of the kingdom to other believers. Furthermore, we are to continually exhort other believers of “the faith” and stay close to them.

Seek righteousness by faith in Christ (through the Spirit) and not by the works of the law (through the flesh)!

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Paul spent three years teaching the Word of the kingdom to the Church in Ephesus, a port city in Asia Minor. Afterwards, he journeyed to Jerusalem where he was rejected by the religious leaders. He was later delivered to Rome where he was imprisoned for preaching the kingdom of God. While he was in prison, Paul wrote his Epistle to the church in Ephesus. Even through much suffering, Paul sought only the furtherance of God's kingdom and the strengthening of the Church. This is the determination and love that Paul had for Christ, for his brethren, and for the hope of his soul-salvation. *Nothing* would separate him from God's love and work in him. An obvious sign of Paul's determination can be seen in **Acts 20:22-27**:

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulation await me.

But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the

blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Paul's focus was not on his suffering or the desire to hold on to his life in this world but on the "joy that was set before him." *Nothing* was more important to him than honoring and serving the Lord or striving to win the crown.

Although Paul was in prison, the gospel of the kingdom spread to numerous groups who met in homes all over Asia. Paul wrote exhorting them to encourage each other in *the faith*. His opening letter addresses them as *the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus*.

Paul begins his Letter with praises to God for His blessings, which were finished before the foundation of the world, and will be made manifest *in the dispensation of the fullness of the times---* that is, at Christ's second coming. Paul spoke of the "mystery" — the offer of the inheritance to those "in Christ" *who are holy and without blame before Him in love*.

But without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing. The Holy Spirit in us is the guarantee of our inheritance into the kingdom *if* we chose to be led by the Spirit during our lifetime. By doing so, we have redemption in the age to come. The word *redemption* is translated in Strong's # G629 as "a ransom in full" or "deliverance." Paul refers to our (soul) salvation as the *redemption of the purchased possession*. Christ paid the price for our salvation at Calvary, and when He returns He will redeem believers who are found worthy (those led by the Spirit) to enter the Kingdom.

Therefore, Paul prayed that God would grant the Ephesians the Spirit of wisdom in the full knowledge (*epignosis*) of Christ and *that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...* (**Ephesians 1:18, 19**). What is the hope of His calling? It is having the hope of entering the kingdom in glory with Christ. For this reason, Paul wanted the Ephesians to continue growing in the faith.

Man is born spiritually *dead in trespasses and sins*, and because we were without the Spirit we followed the flesh, the world and the devil. Upon one's belief in the Lord, the Spirit is made alive in his spirit and he now has the ability to run the race of the faith towards his heavenly calling,

looking forward to God's promise of the reward of the inheritance into the kingdom.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ [by grace you have been saved], and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)

God does not change His mind. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. We were saved in the past by Christ because of God's grace and our faith; and we will be saved in the future because of His grace and our faith. Salvation of all three parts of our being — spirit, soul and body — only comes by God's grace through (our) faith. As noted in **Ephesians 2:5**, it has already been determined before God created anything that we would "*sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" God knows who will receive Him. Therefore, He has already placed His elect to sit on Christ's throne, ruling and reigning in the kingdom of the heavens. We have to choose whether we want to be a part of the inheritance.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

God's gift, by sending His Son as the sacrificial Lamb for our sins, is eternal salvation. And because it is a gift, no works are required. We cannot do anything to earn this salvation. The moment one acknowledges their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is assured eternal life. This is spirit salvation. Part of this gift involved sending the Holy Spirit to guide us to our inheritance — the Millennial Kingdom. The Holy Spirit leads us unto maturity and prepares us for good works.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

After we have received the free gift of the Holy Spirit, we are then to perform good works for the building of His kingdom in order to inherit with Christ. This is soul salvation.

Before God's sacrificial offering of His Son, the Gentiles were without Christ and therefore without the covenants of promise. Without Christ dying for us, the Church would not have been created, and we would be without God in this world. We would have remained Gentiles in sin, spiritually dead and nothing to look forward to, whose end would be death in the lake of fire forever. But because of God's grace, because of His love for us, even while we were yet His enemies, He gave us His only begotten Son, who paid the price for our salvation by His blood.

Then, because of His resurrection, Christ granted us access to His inheritance, the Gentiles being [spiritually] grafted in with the Jews, providing us the offer to be king-priests during the Messianic Era. In this, we can realize how much God desires for us to be with Him and His Son.

We now are no longer apart from God or His covenants, but we share all with Christ and our brethren. We are now part of God's spiritual house, being built on the foundation from the teachings of the apostles and the prophets, who were taught by Christ Himself and who is the Chief Cornerstone, preparing a holy temple of God.

Paul speaks of this as *the mystery of Christ* because it was hidden in ages past, but has now been revealed by the Spirit: *that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...* (**Ephesians 3:6**)

This is the "mystery" and theme of the whole Gospel --- Christians having the opportunity to be partakers with Christ in the kingdom of heaven --- with Christ being the center of this theme. Why was this mystery hidden in the past but now revealed? God waited until the Church was created to make known this mystery, so that His plan and purpose would be fulfilled and Satan's plan thwarted. God's manifold [having many parts; various in character--Strong's #G4164] wisdom concerning his plan and purpose for man regarding rulership may now be seen by the Church to Satan and his evil spiritual beings.

...and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which

from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ: to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places... (Ephesians 3:9, 10)

Satan and his fallen angels are considered “*the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.*” If they would have known that Christ’s death and resurrection was God’s plan to create the Church for the purpose of replacing them as ruler, then they would not have allowed Christ to have died. But Christ succeeded in accomplishing the will of God, so that now the Church may show to Satan and the fallen angels what God’s will and wisdom is concerning their placement in the future Millennial kingdom. *Each and every one of us has the opportunity to rule and reign with Christ and to show to these evil powers that we can overcome.*

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (1 Corinthians 2:7, 8)

After Christ’s death and resurrection, He visited the fallen angels in prison for the purpose of revealing the mystery to them and proclaiming victory.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient...who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Peter 3:18-22)

Paul was in awe to this incredible offer that God had bestowed to the Church. He got down on his knees and prayed for the Church to be strengthened by the Spirit and to be filled with all the fullness of God. Paul wanted the Ephesians to comprehend the magnitude of God’s offer to them, so that they would continue in the faith and not lose heart; so that they would walk in unity, endure the long suffering and win the race.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God

and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Christians are in this race together as one body. We are not competing against each other, rather we are wrestling against *principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12)*. Christians, therefore, should walk in unity, be of like mind and not be divisive. There should be no dissensions and no rivalries, for we know that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism in the Spirit that places all believers in the body of Christ. And if there is one God the Father, then we are all called in one hope --- the hope of His glory, the future Millennial kingdom.

And as one body, Christ ascended to heaven leaving us the responsibility as servants to exhort one another, to do good works according to the Spirit for the building of His kingdom, so that we may qualify for the inheritance --- *reserved in heaven for us*.

Christ first descended into the lower parts of the earth, then ascended to heaven, thereby moving Hades up to the third heaven (far above the heavens) where He sits at the right hand of the Father as High Priest, according to the order of Aaron (**Ephesians 4:8-10**). Upon doing this, He sent us the Holy Spirit along with spiritual gifts. The faithful stewardship of our gifts on earth will determine our position in Christ's kingdom.

Christians have the responsibility to use these gifts for the building and edifying of the Church; to make known the whole gospel of Christ and to keep the unity of the faith, for when we are mature together we are able to exhort one another and remain strong in the Lord. Last, our service to Him is a test: *For how can we serve God as kings and priests in the future kingdom if we do not serve Him now as humble servants, according to His will?* The answer is: *we can't*.

Paul continues on to explain how we can begin to serve God and use the spiritual gifts that we possess. Before we can ever begin to use our gifts for the building of the kingdom we must first *put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true*

righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24). A companion Scripture can be seen in **Romans 12:1, 2:**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Christians must make every effort daily to die to the flesh and choose to walk according to the Spirit — holy and righteous. The Greek translation for *holy* (Strong's #G40) is "physically pure and morally blameless." Everything we do in the body, whether by our acts or thoughts or speech, is to be seen as pure and clean. The Greek translation for *righteous* (Strong's #G1342) is "equitable, just, right" (right living). We are to be just with others and live as we are called -- without blame or sin. When we do sin, we are to confess it to God, and as **1 John 1:9** records: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We must be set apart from this world. This means not to be a part or love the things in this world, a world ruled under Satan. The word *world* means "age." Christians who are dedicated to this world and all its lusts will produce nothing for God, but will only bring swift destruction upon themselves. But a mind dedicated to God and His Word will produce good works for Him and life in the age to come. We are to pattern after the faithful prophets who *confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...but now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country...for He has prepared a city for them.* (**Hebrews 11:13, 16**)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (**1 John 2:15-17**)

Paul mentions ways in which we can put off the "old man" and put on the *new man in Christ*. This must be a choice that we make simply out of

faithful obedience to the Lord. We must choose to put to death our fleshly desires by holding back our natural responses and choosing to act according to the Spirit.

1. Put away lying and speak *the Truth* with his neighbor.
2. Put away anger and bitterness in order to obtain peace and forgiveness.
3. Put away stealing. Labor for what is good, giving to others in need.
4. Put away evil speaking and speak only what is good.

If we do not abide in these things, then we choose to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. If we would just keep in mind that the One who dwells in us is God's Spirit, we would be more careful about all that we say, think and do.

There are four ways in which the "new man in Christ" should walk, as imitators of Christ:

1. Walk in Unity
2. Walk in Love
3. Walk in Light
4. Walk in Wisdom

We are to walk in unity as one body in Christ in order to build the Church. We are to walk in love, just as Christ loved us and sacrificed Himself for us. This type of love is "agape" love, an unconditional love not based solely on feelings, but on obedience and devotion; to hold dear. God says if we love him, we will abide in His commandments.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (1 John 5:1-3)

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." (John 15:9, 10)

We are to love others as God loves us. He loved us even while we were yet His enemies. As imitators of God, we should also demonstrate this type of self-sacrificial love, even to our enemies. This will be a great test of our faithful obedience to Him.

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”
(Matthew 5:44-48)

A companion Scripture can be seen in **Proverbs 25:21, 22**:

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

This act of love and kindness may cause the enemy to feel ashamed. The point is that Christians should be set apart from evil and be a shining light to others. In all circumstances, we are to be examples of Christ. When we do not walk in love, than we are not abiding in God or in His commandments, and our works are no better than our enemies.

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” **(John 15:12-14)**

Because of His great love for us, Christ laid down His life. We also, are to lay down our lives (die to flesh) for Christ. If we abide in doing this, we are truly His friends. Furthermore, we are to pattern His love to others.

We are to walk as children of light. Since we possess the Holy Spirit, we are to *walk according to the fruit of the Spirit, which is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.* We no longer are to walk in darkness, or to associate with the works of darkness, which bears no fruit for God. The works of darkness that surrounded the Ephesians were idol worship. Paul

advised the Ephesians to expose the idolaters by showing their light, in truth and spirit, for the light exposes the works of darkness. Unfruitful works are exposed by our ministry of the Gospel.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”
(Ephesians 5:8)

Upon believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, our position changed from darkness (evil or sin) to light (holiness or righteousness). Light therefore references three things in Scripture: 1) Light is goodness just as darkness is evil. 2) “The Light” represents Christ, and darkness represents Satan. 3) Light also represents life, and darkness represents death.

“I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” **(John 12:46)**

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” **(Matthew 5:16)**

“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place...” **(2 Peter 1:19)**

Believers are to change their walk to correspond to their position in Christ. This means reflecting the very image of Christ. As a new creation in Christ, we are to put away darkness — the sin that comes from the flesh, the world and the devil.

Our minds are renewed by and through the assimilation of God’s Word, enabling us to be transformed as holy and loving servants of God. We are to allow the Holy Spirit to change us day by day, minute by minute.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. **(1 Peter 2:9-12)**

Paul exhorts believers to walk in wisdom, so that we understand what the will of the Lord is. As we gain wisdom from His Word, we are automatically being “filled with the Spirit.”

Paul continues on, teaching the Ephesians the matter surrounding the Christian’s part in submitting to one another, just as the Church must submit to Christ as the Head of the body. In marriage, the relationship between a husband and wife reflects on whether we are being submissive to Christ. God created husband and wife as “one flesh” as a *type* of Christ and His bride. Our marriage relationship is a test of our faithful obedience to God. Wives must voluntarily submit to their husbands as the head, just as Christ is the Head of the Church. And just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her, husbands must love their wives in the same way — as one flesh. Together both are able to build each other up in the Lord.

If one is weak, the other who is strong is able to encourage. If both are strong in the Lord and have put on the armor of God, together they are able to stand against the wiles of the devil. And this is the final command that Paul gives the Ephesians – *Finally....put on the whole armor of God* – the final requirement after they had been taught the whole counsel of God, from grace to glory. In part five of this chapter under “Battling the three enemies of God,” there is an in-depth study concerning the whole armor of God. As the present ruler of this age, Satan seeks to attack Christians from submitting to the Lord. This is why the Word of God is our sword and the *only* weapon of defense against the wiles of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

The true battle is with Satan and his demonic beings who work through false teachers, most of whom are unaware. And Satan works through pastor-teachers because he knows that they can do the most harm, just as he worked through the disciple Peter to go against God’s plan for Jesus.

Satan, not fully knowing God’s plan for His Son, used Peter in an attempt to deceive Christ. When Peter tried to get Jesus to change His course, Jesus told Peter,

“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matthew 16:23)

Jesus forewarned Peter that Satan would have a hold on him — Peter would deny the Lord three times.

“Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Luke 22:31, 32)

We can realize with the Church in Ephesus that they were a group of believers who were well taught in the Word of the kingdom and who had every opportunity to go on to maturity. Paul kept them focused on the ‘mystery,’ the Word of the kingdom, and did not cease to give them warnings so that they would not drift away. He warned them night and day with tears for three years. Even so, Paul writes a shocking statement to Timothy concerning the actions of the Church in Ephesus and throughout Asia:

This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. (2 Timothy 1:15)

Most all of the Church who had been taught the truth of the Word by Paul had turned their back on their inheritance. The Church in Ephesus had stopped focusing on God’s Word which caused them to fall back into the world with all its lusts, being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; and over a period of time they lost their focus and love for Christ and the future kingdom to come.

This is pictured in **Revelation** chapter **two**, beginning with the Lord’s judgment to the Church in Ephesus at the beginning of the dispensation and concludes with the Church in Laodicea at the very end of the dispensation, a period of two thousand years. These Churches present an overall portrayal of believers who at the beginning left their ‘first love,’ resulting in a complete betrayal of the Lord’s Word at the end of the dispensation, which is nauseating in the Lord’s sight:

“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I

will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked' - (Revelation 3:16)

Therefore, with the Church in Ephesus we must realize that this is a representation of the actions of the whole of Christianity and a warning of the same possibility for every kingdom believer who may become complacent in their pursuit of the kingdom. We can conclude that the Lord's words recorded here will be addressed to a majority of Christians at the Judgment seat of Christ in the near future. The Lord's warning of "*I will vomit you out of My mouth*" should not be taken lightly. With regard to our own choices, let us not make the same mistakes as they did, but do what it takes to be overcomers. Let us not be deceived into thinking there will be no consequence.

Let us therefore move forward with diligence in faithful obedience to the Word of God, and be focused constantly on the kingdom to come, so that we are strengthened and prepared in our fight against the evil one and in our race of the faith until the end.

SECTION 2 — Philippians to Timothy

The Epistle to the Philippians

Paul's Epistle to the Philippians centered on *suffering for Christ*. Paul had endured much persecution and was imprisoned when he wrote this Epistle, yet he was grateful for his trials because it produced more boldness to speak the Word. His testimony resulted in the spread of the Gospel and for that Paul was thankful. Paul used his imprisonment to express to the Philippians what it meant to suffer for Christ's sake, so that they too could be ready to endure affliction and to remain faithful in all circumstances. Paul prayed that their love and passion for knowledge would continue to grow, for he knew that this would be their strength against trials and suffering. When we possess "the hope," the confident expectation of a future with Christ, we are not ashamed of the gospel under persecution, but are bold and joyful. When we can rejoice in our sufferings, then we are perfect; we are mature.

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:2-5)

Paul tells them, *“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21)*. Paul expressed his faith to the Philippians, that whether he was alive or dead he belonged to Christ. If he lived, he lived for Christ and the Spirit of Christ was in him, and if he died, he would finally be with Christ.

For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. (Romans 14:8)

It is clear in all of Paul’s Epistles that we must suffer in this world. This world is presently ruled under Satan, and until Christ takes over, we will suffer. This is not our world; this is not our time; this is not our home. *Suffering must precede glory*. And, as pilgrims on this earth, our battle does not lie with flesh and blood, but with Satan. He is the tempter who brings about tribulation; a deceiver and a liar who attacks believers.

One of Satan’s biggest deceptions is challenging believers to presume that prosperity is connected to people’s goodness and consequently that people’s suffering is connected to their sin. Also, he adds the notion that if we are children of God, and He is good and true, we will always have joy, peace, good health and wealth in our life now. Satan puts this work of evil into the minds of men from the pulpit where the most harm can be done. Many “prosperity” Churches as well as “charismatic” Churches bring this false doctrine to those who have itching ears (those who only care to hear the fluffy, feel-good message). Beware of those who preach wealth, health and peace in this life, or that they can perform these miracles — it is a lie of the devil. This message will only bring a false sense of security and faith in God. The congregation who believes it will have all these expectations for their present life and when these things do not happen, they fall away from the Lord. Then, when trials and tribulations occur, they blame God. This is just another way for Satan to keep Christians from knowing the truth and overcoming.

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me. (Philippians 1:29)

‘Suffering for Christ’s sake’ means enduring Satan’s attacks because of the faith, growth, and ministry of the gospel of Christ. It means suffering for the Word of God. Because Satan seeks to destroy the Word of the kingdom, Christians may suffer persecution from others when attempting to spread this message. But with the sword of the Spirit and the Word of God, we can overcome our sufferings. Suffering for Christ is a test of our faith; it strengthens us and prepares us for rulership.

Knowing what the future had in store for Him, Christ humbled Himself and was obedient to God’s commands, even to the point of death. This was part of God’s plan from the beginning, so that afterwards Christ would be rewarded and exalted above all. And Christ is our example, therefore we also are to suffer now and be exalted later. Suffering precedes glory!

*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.
(1 Peter 2:21)*

We must be humble servants, faithfully obedient to God’s commands. Since Christ died for us, we ought to give all to Christ. Paul was an excellent example, who counted all things rubbish, things that he had once deemed important, for the privilege of knowing Christ. Paul, an eyewitness, student and friend to the Messiah, lived to gain the knowledge of Him.

*...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
(Philippians 3:10, 11)*

Paul realized the amazing treasure that was set before him made possible by Christ and he was determined to press toward the goal for that treasure. The treasure or prize is the future upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This is why Paul dedicated his life to knowing the power of His resurrection.

Paul realized the significance of Christ's resurrection from the dead and that it pointed towards much more than being resurrected with all believers in that future Day. This was a special resurrection---an "out-resurrection" from among the resurrected, or a called-out from the called. It was a *special* upward calling; a reward for those who qualify. Normally throughout the New Testament, the word *resurrection* [Greek word *anastasis*; Strong's #G386] means "a standing up again, i.e. literally from death." However, in **Philippians 3:10**, the word "ex" meaning *out* is added to "anastasis" [Strong's #G1815] referring to an "out-resurrection" from among the dead.

And in order to achieve this, Paul lived to know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. This was associated with his present sufferings and death (dying to self or denying his flesh, "the old man") in order to acquire future glory and life in Christ's kingdom. Jesus Himself, during His ministry, taught about this qualification --- the out-resurrection --- which points to the salvation of one's soul:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life [soul] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [soul] for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." (Matthew 16:24-27)

The goal of every Christian should be that he may receive the higher calling from God and the salvation of his soul in order to rule and reign with Christ. If we choose to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit then we must inevitably suffer, because dying to our flesh never comes easy. But only then can we produce the fruit of the Spirit and good works for the building of the kingdom. If we are victorious in running this race to the end, we will rejoice in the Day of the Lord.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I

may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. (Philippians 2:14-16)

When believers suffer and do not put their trust in the Lord, the suffering becomes unbearable. They rely on the flesh and the world to provide aid. Suffering comes to all, believers and unbelievers alike, but those who know and trust in the Lord, He will provide a way of escape, that they may be able to bear it (**1 Corinthians 10:13a**). Whatever the outcome, even to the point of death, we should remain faithful because of His promise — the promise that those who choose to live for Him now will live with Him in the age to come. Therefore, seek aid through faith in Christ Jesus, that which leads to millennial life. And be glad if you are suffering for Christ's sake or for righteousness sake, for this is commendable to God and He will faithfully reward you.

If we choose to abide in good works, it is God who ultimately works in us to accomplish His will. If one chooses to seek Him diligently and asks in faith, God will reveal the deep things to him.

...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12b, 13)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:5, 6)

As ambassadors for Christ, our business in this world is to beseech others to be reconciled to God. We are not *of* this world, although we are *in* this world. We are to consider ourselves as pilgrims passing through to do the will of God, *for our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20)*

Through our sufferings, let us endure patiently in prayer, remaining steadfast in the faith, that we may have the peace of God through it all. Let us set our minds on things above, for the Lord is coming soon.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known

to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6, 7)

Meditate on this Scripture in **Philippians 4:6, 7**, for it is only the peace of God that can sustain us through our trials and sufferings. And on *that Day* when we have overcome, “*my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*” (**Philippians 4:19, 20**)

The Epistle to the Colossians

Like the Ephesians, Paul witnessed the Colossian’s growth in “the faith” and their love of the brethren because of the hope that was in them [**Colossians 1:3-5**; cf: **Ephesians 1:15-18**]. This “hope” had to do with the coming glory of Christ and with an inheritance. Paul prayed for them to be strengthened in all knowledge and encouraged them to continue in the race of the faith. In this Letter to the Colossians, he outlines the course needed to run the race, where this race leads them, and how to overcome the opposing forces that war against the Spirit for the sole purpose of stopping them from running the race of the faith.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. (Colossians 1:9-14)

Wisdom and spiritual understanding

Christians are called upon to make the necessary preparations for the coming glory of Christ. But before this can be done, one must be “*filled with the knowledge of His will*” in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Because of the tares that were placed in the Church, there is a present lack

of knowledge concerning the gospel of the glories of Christ and therefore lack of understanding. Today, this has resulted in a complete eradication of teaching on the subject entirely. Without the knowledge and understanding of the gospel of glory, the purpose is omitted and there is no moving forward to any “hope” set before them. But once a Christian has attained the knowledge of His will, he then is able to go on to maturity and to fulfill his purpose in Christ. He must seek wisdom and spiritual understanding like treasure. He must search the Scriptures in order to unfold the mystery, beginning with the foundation, and build upon accordingly.

Walk worthy of the Lord

Spiritual wisdom and understanding provides us with the ability to walk worthy of the Lord, which is referenced in **Ephesians** chapter **five**: Walk in unity, Walk in Love, Walk in Light and Walk in Wisdom with the character of the “new man” in Christ [**Ephesians 4:17; Colossians 3:12**]. As representatives of Christ, therefore, we should strive to be like Him.

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Colossians 4:5)

Christ is our model and our greatest example. Walk like Him.

Fully pleasing Him

We were placed in this world “*to do business till He comes*” as servants of Christ, therefore we aim to please Him so that we can be found worthy on that Day of Judgment when He says to us, “*Well done, good and faithful servant.*” (**Matthew 25:21**)

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.” (Colossians 4:22-25)

The business that we are to do is “works of righteousness” that requires faithful obedience to the Word of God. *But without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).*

Being fruitful in every good work

“Fruit” comes from the Holy Spirit and “works” are from our own efforts. In order for these “good works” to be “fruitful,” they must emanate from the Holy Spirit and not from the flesh. The “fruit” of the Spirit is revealed in **Galatians 5:22**:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The character of the “new man” in **Colossians 3:12-14, 16**, also requires the application of the fruit of the Spirit in our ministry for Christ.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection...

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.

Increasing in the knowledge of God

When we diligently study His Word, the Holy Spirit reveals the deep things of God, which is able to strengthen us in the faith. The more we increase in the knowledge of God, the more our faith increases and so will our relationship with God.

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26)

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16:13)

Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power

The knowledge of God is our strength against the evil one, against false teachers, against the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, the cares of this world and our own fleshly weaknesses. The Word of God is the only armor that can protect us from these evil forces. When we are weak, we look to the Lord to provide us strength through the Word of God. Just as the Lord told Paul,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

If we put on the whole armor of God daily, we can be strengthened with His might, able to endure anything that comes our way. If we seek strength through the knowledge of God, He will freely give it to us and we give thanks to Him for it, because it is done only by His grace and glorious power.

For all patience and longsuffering with joy

The strength that we obtain through the Word of God is able to bring about patient endurance and longsuffering in any circumstance, trial, or tribulation we face. We are strengthened when our focus is on the commands of Scripture and our faithful obedience to those commands. It is then that we can overcome any trial because we trust God through it. When we realize that no event or no man in this world can harm us or take from us the life of our soul in the age to come, then we can be joyful through sufferings and overcome. *There is no harm that anyone can do to us with respect to our entrance into the Kingdom if we remain faithfully obedient to what God commands.* And we can be joyful in this, knowing that our trust and hope is in Him at all times.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

This phrase “for when he has been approved” in **James 1:12** speaks of a future time when all believers will be judged according to their works. A believer who patiently endures temptation in this age will be blessed with the “crown of life” in the age to come. This believer has shown that he loves the Lord, because he has abided in His commandments (**John 15:10; 1 John 5:3**).

Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Before the foundation of the world, God the Father through His Son had finished all of His works, one of which was to qualify those who will be partakers with Christ in His kingdom on that future Day. For this, we give Him thanks daily and we earnestly hope that we may be found worthy to partake of this inheritance. This is our *daily* hope. Before the ages began, God delivered us from the power of darkness, who is Satan, and conveyed the faithful overcomers into the kingdom of Christ, which is to be manifested yet future. The “partakers” will be those who will be found qualified at the Judgment seat of Christ as “joint heirs” with Christ in His future Millennial kingdom.

All things were planned and created by Christ from the beginning — the heavens, the earth and everything in it to include Israel, the Gentiles, the Church, the Judgment seat of Christ, Christ’s bride, the Messianic Era and the Eternal Ages beyond. All events have already transpired and all of God’s works have been finished, from eternity past to eternity future!

It is incredible to think that we have already appeared at the Judgment seat of Christ and our works have already been judged. In the future, these events will be manifested and realized by us. God has already prepared a place for those who love Him --- *everything* has already been set in place.

When John was transported by God to the Judgment seat of Christ recorded in the Book of **Revelation**, this was not a dream or a vision. This was a *live* event, a live transportation from one place to another, and all Christians were present!

The Word has many references on God's omnipotent and manifold wisdom concerning the mystery of the bride. One reference can be seen in **1 Corinthians 2:7, 8**:

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age (Satan and his fallen angels) knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

The following is a companion Scripture to **1 Corinthians 2:7**:

...and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Satan and his fallen angels), according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord... (Ephesians 3:9)

Christ created *all* things from the beginning of time. He was there with God and through Him all things were created and finished. This is what **Colossians 1:15-18** reveals:

He (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him (Jesus Christ) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

In the beginning, the heavens were created first and then the earth. However, at the end of the Millennium when all things will be reconciled by Christ the opposite will take effect — first on earth then in heaven. The first major part of this reconciliation took place when He laid down His life on the Cross. The second part will be when He returns to gather His saints, and final reconciliation will take place when He has put all enemies under His feet and He delivers the kingdom to God the Father at the end of the Messianic Era.

Our hope in God’s plan of reconciliation should be to take part as co-heirs with Him during the Millennium. This is the “mystery” that was hidden for generations until Christ came and revealed it to the Church.

...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to his saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26, 27)

Though the Spirit of Christ is in every believer, not everyone allows the Spirit to lead their lives unto maturity. Paul gave warning of this when he said, *Him (Christ) we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:28)*

What if one does not mature in the gospel of Christ? Paul warns believers of two things that will occur. First, the believer will be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and though the message may be persuasive and backed up by the traditions of men, it will have no root in the Word of God — he will be enticed to adhere to deceptive and false doctrine. Second, as a result of the first occurrence, he will not know his purpose in Christ, nor will he be able to run the race of the faith or produce any fruit.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:8, 9)

What are some of these **false messages**? The following lists a common few:

1. There is no literal kingdom to come. The kingdom is in our hearts.
2. Man is not a three-part being like God, man is a two-part being made up of body and spirit/soul (spirit and soul are the same).
3. Your eternal salvation is a gift, but you must not sin and you must do good works or you will lose your eternal salvation.
4. There is no judgment for Christians, only for the unsaved. All Christians will receive rewards and all will be with Christ in His kingdom unto eternity.
5. One only needs to pray and God will provide riches and glory in this life.
6. Christians who do not sin and who serve the Lord will never have trials or tribulations.
7. Do not focus on the reward, but only in serving the Lord.
8. You must abide by the Law of Moses (through the flesh), and the feasts and Jewish traditions or you will not possess salvation.
9. God is not a Triune God; there is no Trinity.

These are FALSE and confusing messages taught from the pulpit today. And these false messages began during the early Church period when Satan did his harmful work of placing tares in the Church to confuse and deceive believers into thinking, “*you will not surely die,*” as he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

And within these false messages, the works of legalism were enforced. Although Jesus Christ paid the price, wiped away sin once and for all, wiped out the handwriting of requirements so that the just will live by faith and faith alone in Him, false teachers continue to teach salvation by the law (**Colossians 2:14**). Watch out for these pastor-teachers who seek to stray believers away from the Truth — they are full of pride, seeking to be exalted and glorified by men.

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations---Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?
(Colossians 2:16-22)

The law was made to expose sin and was never a means to obtain righteousness or salvation. Christ's death took away sin — faith alone in Christ alone is the only way to obtain righteousness and salvation. And if one remains faithful, he will be transformed and prepared for good works. This will lead to soul salvation in the coming age.

An immature Christian, who has no care or hope for the future kingdom, will set his mind on earthly things and not on things above. He is foolish in being satisfied with knowing little to nothing about Christ. He is totally deceived, being blinded by the cares of this world and his fleshly desires, that which keeps him in bondage to sin and Satan. He is a carnal man, living a life that leads to destruction.

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
(Colossians 3:2-4)

Our baptism signified our death with Christ as we were emerged in the water. It acknowledged our commitment to put to death our fleshly desires and instead live for Christ. This requires setting our minds on Him and not on the things of this world. Upon doing this, we will be raised in glory when He returns. How do we live for Christ? We must put on the “new man in Christ” and put off the “old man.” **Colossians 3:12-17** gives us the character of the new man:

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another;

even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let

the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

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 whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

By allowing the indwelling Holy Spirit to teach us the Word, and then abiding in it accordingly, we will subsequently transform into the character of the “new man,” demonstrating that we are living for Christ.

Paul then reflects on being submissive to God’s commands. We are to be submissive to others of authority (according to the Scriptures), just as Christ was submissive to His Father. It is a test of our faithful obedience to God’s commands, knowing that we will give an account of our actions to Christ. This race of faith that we are in as individuals becomes a personal issue between us and the Lord. Our faithful obedience is not negotiable even though the circumstances we face may be difficult. Even if our relationship with another becomes extremely difficult, what does God say for us to do? We must obey and trust in God. In the end, what matters is how we treated others according to God’s commands no matter how they treated us. Our words and deeds toward others reflect our relationship with Christ. Do it for the Lord and not for men, because your heavenly reward will come from Him and no one else. For, *the Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.* (Psalms 34:22)

If we love God, then we will trust Him and keep His commandments; and those who have faith in Him can overcome anything in this world.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. (1 John 5:3, 4)

The Epistle to the Thessalonians

Paul and Timothy traveled together on their second missionary journey. One of their successes during this journey was the conversion of the

Church in Thessalonica. Though the Church experienced much opposition amongst other believers, they continued to follow Paul and Timothy's teachings regarding the gospel of the kingdom.

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 1:6, 7)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13)

It is clear in these two Scriptures that the content of Paul's message to the Church is the gospel of glory and not the gospel of grace as they were already believers. The Church, in turn, ministered to others in the surrounding area, to those who "already believed."

Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to stay strong in the faith, knowing that their sufferings will bring reward. Paul tells them not to be surprised at suffering for Christ's sake, for those who live godly lives should expect persecution. Paul experienced much opposition in Thessalonica, proving to be a hostile environment for the gospel of glory. Paul was forced to leave the city prematurely, and when he wanted to return, Satan hindered him. But in spite of persecution and satanic opposition, Paul looked beyond the present trials to the joy of being in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3 [The word sanctify [Strong's #38] means to be "set apart"]). A major problem for the Church was maintaining sexual purity due to idol worship. Pagan religions often condoned sexual immorality as part of their rites. In contrast, Paul strongly urged the Thessalonians not to participate in any sexual activity outside of marriage. They would be going against God's commandments if they did this, thereby rejecting God.

Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:8)

The Christian's body is God's temple and should be kept holy. Rejecting holiness is rejecting God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us.

As the faith of the Thessalonians grew, they anticipated the coming of the Lord and had questions on the subject. Evidently, they were concerned that believers who had already died would miss the resurrection of the Church. Paul, therefore, clarified the matter by affirming that believers who were dead would precede those believers still living.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep [dead].

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [The Greek word "caught up" is *harpazo* (Strong's G726) meaning "rapture"] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)*

With the trumpet of God and the voice of Christ, all living believers will be raptured to meet the Lord. The dead [bodies] in Christ will be joined with their soul and spirit in order to rise first. Then those believers still alive, possessing the Holy Spirit in them, will be "caught up" with the other believers in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air — all simultaneously *in the twinkling of an eye*. Therefore, all three parts of man: spirit, soul and body, will be raised to the Judgment seat of Christ. Paul reassured the Thessalonians that this is not a problem for a supernatural God who created the world. Clearly the resurrection will be a physical resurrection in which bodily existence will be restored, as confirmed in **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**. The raised bodies of Christians will be animated by the spirit, yet they will be bodies of flesh and bone (**Luke 24:39**). And they will all be recognizable, as was the resurrected body of Christ (**1 John 3:2**).

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live [believers]. For as the Father has life in

Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all [believers] who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth---those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”
(John 5:25-29)

The bride (overcoming Christians) will be granted glorified bodies. Just as God is Spirit, the bride will also be spirits in the kingdom of heaven. No longer will their life be animated by the blood, but will be animated by the spirit, just like angels.

“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.” **(Matthew 22:30)**

Overcomers will worship God in spirit in the kingdom of heaven, not in the flesh. Therefore, we must practice putting to death our flesh and doing everything in the spirit now, according to the Holy Spirit. False worshipers, those who worship in the flesh, will not be found qualified to possess life in the age to come. In the eyes of God, these Christians have done evil works according to the flesh and will not be granted glorified bodies, but will be condemned to outer darkness and blackness of darkness outside of the kingdom for one thousand years.

The rapture of the Church will mark the beginning of the Lord’s Day in the heavens and immediately following will be the final seven years of Man’s Day upon the earth. For carnal believers, this day will come as a thief in the night. For them, the appearance of Christ will be completely unexpected, as it is with a thief. Although these believers are transported to the heavens, they will have to stand before the Lord to be judged and upon decisions and determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ, their works will be burned and they will find themselves cast out of the kingdom for one thousand years. But for faithful Christians who were preparing and looking for this Day, they will not be surprised. These Christians will be found worthy to rule and reign in the kingdom as king-priests, for their works will pass the test of fire at the Judgment seat of

Christ. The Day of the Lord will be a time of judgment and cleansing executed by Christ and His co-heirs for a period of one thousand years.

The individuals left behind will be the remaining population on the earth--Jews and Gentiles. It will be *a time of Jacob's trouble, such as never before*. During the last half of the Tribulation, God will bring His people, Israel, to a place of repentance. God will allow the Gentile nations under Antichrist to annihilate many Jews. Paul wanted the Church in Thessalonica to be aware, to be prepared, and not be in darkness like Israel.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman.

And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all son of light and sons of the day. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6)

1 Thessalonians chapter **five** speaks of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord is characterized by two inseparable events over a period of one thousand years: 1) Christ's judgment over His people and 2) His reign over the earth. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to be mindful of that Day and to live in light of what they already know. *For when they say, "Peace and safety"* refers to the man of sin, Antichrist, during the Tribulation. At the beginning of the Tribulation, Antichrist will promise "peace and safety" with regards to the Middle East problem, but will only bring chaos and destruction over Israel and over all the earth.

"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, nor ever will be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Matthew 24:19-22)

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king (antichrist) shall arise, having

fierce features who understands sinister schemes.

His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power (but by the power of Satan); He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty (Gentile leaders) and also the holy people (Jews). Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart.

He shall destroy many in their prosperity (peace). He shall even rise against the Prince of princes (Christ Jesus); but he shall be broken without human means. (Daniel 8:23-25)

Following three and a half years of the Tribulation, known as the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist will be revealed. When the Levitical sacrifices are taken away from the [newly-built] Jewish temple and the image of the Antichrist is set up, Christ warns the remnant to run for their lives.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice [Levitical sacrifices] is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. [three and a half years] (Daniel 12:11)

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15, 16)

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:7, 8)

The Jews (and Gentiles) will experience unparalleled tribulation. And because they will continue to be disobedient to the Lord, God will keep them in a state of blindness that they should believe the lies of the Antichrist.

The coming of the lawless one (Antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and

with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

All things have been revealed to us in the Word of God, for He wants “to show His servants---things which must shortly take place” (Revelation 1:1). Knowing this, we should be diligent to be the type of person that God wants us to be — holy, loving, faithful, set apart, and mature in Christ, so that our spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless and we may be counted worthy when that Day comes.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

...because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other...for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.... (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5)

If we suffer persecution for righteousness' sake and endure, God will repay on that Day and give us rest. The non-overcomer's punishment will last one thousand years as they will be separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. They will not receive glorified bodies or be with Christ, but will spend their time in darkness and torment outside of the kingdom of the heavens.

...since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

in flaming fire [judgment] taking vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ. [immature, carnal Christians]. These shall be punished with everlasting [age-lasting; millennial] destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day... (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

We must be faithful in repaying no one evil for evil. When we do good to evil-doers, the Lord is pleased. What does the Word say to do if your brother rejects the true message? The Word says to pray for them and continue to love them, not harboring any ill feelings or repaying back with evil. However, we also are not to keep company with them, lest we share in their evil deeds and without notice stray away from the faith.

Throughout the course of his ministry, Paul was committed to the Word that Christ had entrusted to him and he refused to be associated with someone who wouldn't remain with him in the ministry (**Acts 15:38-41**). He also refused to let anything deter him from being able to complete his mission for which he had been called (**Acts 9:16; Philippians 1:27-29**).

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in going good. And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (2 Thessalonians 3:13-15)

We are to stand fast and hold the Truth close to our hearts and minds, keeping on the straight and narrow path and not deviating from it. Paul and Timothy's prayer to the Thessalonian should be our prayer for our brethren:

Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling [the higher calling of the kingdom], and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,

that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12)

The Epistle to Timothy

While Timothy remained in Ephesus, Paul wrote to him, exhorting him to “*fight the good fight*” of the faith. Evidently, Timothy was experiencing rejection from certain individuals within the Church who were “*desiring to be teachers of the law*” and “*who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past.*” Paul told Timothy to instruct and correct them. These individuals did not understand the things they taught yet spoke evil of Timothy and the true message. Paul prayed to God to deliver these blasphemers over to Satan, not because they were unsaved, but because they were unfaithful believers whose flesh needed affliction and chastening. Because they had rejected the true message, Paul had excluded them from the Church. His purpose in doing so was to remove their evil deeds from the Church, and, in the hopes that they may abandon their evil ways.

Paul charged Timothy to “*wage the good warfare*” by keeping his faith and by building up the Church. Every Church will battle spiritual warfare. Satan’s seed is in a constant state of attack against the Church, and he does this through the flesh. The Spirit constantly makes war against the flesh and the flesh against the Spirit. When the flesh takes control, it gives access to Satan’s evil spirits.

The unsaved knows only to live in the flesh, because they do not have the Spirit within them; their own spirits are dead. But believers can live according to the flesh or the Spirit, and they are always opposed forces. Paul encourages the believers to overcome the deeds of the flesh by choosing to live according to the Spirit. Believers who choose to live in the flesh will by no means inherit the kingdom of God. This was the reason Paul asked God to deliver the flesh of these men over to Satan, so that they may repent of their deeds, cleanse their hearts, and renew a right spirit in them.

A similar situation occurred in the Corinthian Church with a member practicing sexual immorality (**1 Corinthians 5:1-5**). Together with the members of the Church, Paul asked God in prayer to deliver the wicked believer to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the *Day of the Lord*. Clearly, this is not speaking of eternal verities, for all believers are saved in the Eternal Ages, the part of salvation that is irrevocable. This is speaking of millennial verities, in

which the soul, spirit, and body must be saved in order to inherit, the part of salvation which is conditional and *is* revocable.

This Christian's evil deed of sexual immorality was contaminating the entire Church. This Christian could have caused others to fall, especially since the Church was allowing it, thereby endorsing it. The Church was not to ignore this man's disobedience, but hold him accountable.

Likewise, Paul exhorted Timothy to stand firm in the faith against those in the Church who were acting wickedly and rejecting his message.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:3-5)

The point here is to be set apart from Christians who are engaged in false messages and unrighteous living. False doctrine involves embracing the values, perceptions and practices of the world. These false messages do not align with the Truth -- their purpose is to completely corrupt the Word of the kingdom. Jesus Christ warned about this very thing in **Matthew 13:33**:

Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

The placing of the leaven through the tares was Satan's way of corrupting the Word of the Kingdom, a two thousand year corruption resulting in the complete elimination of this message. And for this reason, you will not hear the true message being taught in the Church today. There are only a few who are truly seeking to know the Lord through His Word, working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and awaiting that future Day of the Lord.

Paul continually provided warnings concerning false doctrine in the Church, on falling away, and on those who speak against the Word of the kingdom.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (1 Timothy 4:1, 12)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ear away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:3-5)

At the near time of his death, Paul gave words of encouragement to Timothy. Paul had endured in the faith, even under much persecution and suffering. He knew that God would reward him with the crown of righteousness on that Day, and that he would live again to rule and reign with Christ. Though most of the Churches in Asia had forsaken him and fell away from the Truth, he asked God to forgive them. He knew he himself had "*fought the good fight,*" and had "*finished the race of the faith.*" And he was assured of receiving the Lord's promise.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7, 8)

Paul also knew that on that Day when he faces His Judge at the Judgment seat of Christ, his good works of ministry to the Gentiles would wipe away every evil work he did in his past. His transformation and his service to God would qualify him to enter the future heavenly kingdom.

And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! (2 Timothy 4:18)

Paul had kept the faith, hope and love of Christ and the kingdom until the end.

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.
(2 Timothy 2:11-13)

Too often these words are taken lightly and without much thought. Christians fail to realize the profound implications of this message. Those who have become complacent are not likely to receive this Word with benefit. Eternal salvation is not in view here. This has to do with the salvation of the soul — Millennial life.

"For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him" refers to believers who, in their lifetime, have put to death the flesh and lived according to the Spirit. These believers will live with Christ in the kingdom to come.

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" means if we finish the race of the faith, being faithfully obedient to His Word through sufferings — then we will reign with Him in the future Millennial kingdom.

"If we deny Him, He will deny us" means if believers deny Christ and His second coming, which includes His literal kingdom to come, then He will deny *them* at the Judgment seat of Christ. He will deny them entrance into His kingdom for one thousand years.

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." Christ is always faithful and just -- He is the same today, tomorrow and forever. He will stay true to His promises, judgments, commandments, His plans and purposes even if we are unfaithful to Him. He cannot lie and therefore cannot deny Himself. Everything has already been determined and all of His works have been finished since before the foundation of the world. If we are unfaithful believers, He will remain the righteous Judge and judge us according to our works. If we are faithless, our works will inevitably deny us entrance into Millennial life, but our eternal salvation remains secure.

Note that every sentence in **2 Timothy 2:11-13** begins with the word *if*, meaning there are conditions placed. Therefore, this has nothing to do with eternal life as there are no works required (Christ did the work, paid the price — it was His gift to us) but for Millennial life, works *are* required for entrance into the kingdom. It is conditioned upon good works emanating from the Spirit. This is why God "*begs*" us to be diligent to do good works:

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:11, 12)

SECTION 3 — TITUS TO JUDE

The Epistle to Titus

Paul had commissioned Titus to set things in order for the Church in Crete. The believers in Crete lacked leadership and, as a result, were suffering. Because of false teachers who were preaching for dishonest gain, the morals of the congregation were disrupted. Paul relied on Titus to help them establish their leadership by appointing elders in every city and bringing in sound doctrine.

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouth's must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. (Titus 1:10, 11)

Titus was to instruct the congregation on the qualities of a sound Church, focused on Christ and the His coming glory rather than observing a list of rules that have no Biblical support, but come from the commandments of men.

Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth...

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving [in "the faith"] nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.
(**Titus 1:13-16**)

In **Titus 1:13-16**, Paul highlights the asceticism of the Cretan false teachers. They had identified certain foods and practices as defiled when in reality it was their minds that were defiled and unbelieving. These teachings led to the initial corruption of the Church, when Satan placed his "tares" to deceive Christians and corrupt the Word of the kingdom. Satan accomplished this corruption by convincing the Church to become married to the world. Whereas the Church had been separate from the world system under Satan, now it was intertwined within that system of rulership and with all its lusts.

This is where the Church finds itself today. This letter to Titus is as relevant today as it was then. A clear indication can be seen through the deception, divisions and immorality in the Church today. The carnal Christians in Crete were living no different than unsaved individuals. Paul says *they profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient and disqualified for every good work* (**Titus 1:16**).

In order to bring the Church back to the truth, Paul wanted the Church to understand what is involved in attaining their salvation [of the soul].

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age,

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (**Titus 2:11-14**)

The Epistle to **Titus** centers on the Christian's "blessed hope" for the coming age. The word "hope" is the Greek translation (Strong's # G1680) for "*elpis*" meaning "to anticipate with pleasure; expectation or

confidence.” The word *hope* is associated with a “mature knowledge of the truth,” which is inextricably connected to the Word of the kingdom, having to do with a future inheritance. In **Titus 2:12**, there is a connection to the two phrases, “*blessed hope and glorious appearing*;” the latter giving further description to the former. Christians who possess this hope are the ones who will be partakers of Christ’s glory. For the last two thousand years, God has been looking for a bride for His Son. The bride will be “His own special people” who have produced good works for Christ and who have kept the “blessed hope” of His “glorious appearing” and of entering His kingdom.

The whole purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection was to give us this *blessed hope*, to offer us Millennial life. In **Titus 3:7**, the word “eternal” has been translated from the Greek word “*aionios*.” However, in this particular verse, the meaning is derived from its textual usage, not from the word itself. *Anionios* [from *aion*, Strong’s #G165] refers to “a period of time; an age — a Messianic period.” In this case, the word “eternal” is best translated “age-lasting,” referring to the coming age, the Kingdom Age of 1000 years.

...according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal [age-lasting] life. (Titus 3:5-7)

The change in us must come from within, allowing the Spirit to change our hearts and minds. The blessed hope changes our perspective regarding our desires, determination and purpose. When we have this blessed hope we no longer seek for things on earth to satisfy our flesh, but we seek things above to satisfy and please Him. This is the hope that Paul wanted to convey through Titus to the Church in Crete.

This hope looks forward to the Day when we can partake of Christ’s glory in the kingdom of the heavens. In that Day, the kingdom of heaven will resound with beautiful voices. The angels will cast their crowns before the throne of God and they will be given to the saints, the overcomers, who will now rule and reign with Christ on His throne. The overcomers will possess the image and likeness of God, and will be given authority to rule over the earth with great joy and anticipation. As king-priests, the

overcomer's work will be the most stimulating and rewarding work imaginable. Imagine what it will be like to dwell with Him and have this most precious and profound life.

The Epistle to Philemon

This short Epistle from Paul is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and to the Colossian Church, but specifically is directed to Philemon as it uses the singular "I" and "you" throughout the Letter.

During the time the Epistle was written, a large portion of the population of the Roman Empire was made up of bondservants or slaves. These people were considered property and could be abused and even killed by their masters. But within the Church, wealthy slave owners and their slaves worshiped together as equals. Some slaves were gifted spiritual leaders and ministered the Word to people far above their status (according to the world). The Church evidently was meeting in Philemon's house and he was likely an active leader in the Church.

Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, ran away and became a Christian under Paul's ministry. In this Epistle, Paul tells Philemon that it was God's plan that Onesimus ran away, as it led to his salvation. Furthermore, he was very useful for the work of the Lord. Paul wanted to keep Onesimus in Rome, helping in the ministry, giving aid to him while in prison. He wanted Onesimus to "*minister to me in my chains for the gospel*" (**Philemon 1:13**). Paul told Philemon that he was sending Onesimus back to him for a decision. Now that Onesimus was a believer in the faith, Paul encourages Philemon to view him as a "beloved brother" and no longer as a slave.

Before Paul makes his plea to Philemon to keep Onesimus, he first addresses Philemon's faith and love toward his brethren. This is the subject in which his plea would be built upon. Paul was overjoyed with Philemon's love for the Church and that he was sharing his faith in word and in deed.

Therefore, Paul pleads with Philemon that he would forgive Onesimus for his transgressions and offered to pay for any loss Philemon suffered because of Onesimus's actions in the past. Paul promises to pay his debt to assure the runaway slave's gracious reception by his owner. Paul

wanted Philemon's consent to keep Onesimus with him. As a Christian brother, faithful to God, Paul is expecting Philemon to be compassionate to his former slave and to be obedient to God in this matter. But whether Philemon chooses to do what is correct or not is between him and God.

For what does God say about how bondservants and masters should treat each other?

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (Ephesians 6:5-9)

In **Ephesians 6:5-9**, bondservants of Christ (Christians) are to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, so that our conduct will be honorable amongst the Gentiles with whom we dwell as pilgrims in this world. Likewise, Christian masters are to be gentle with their bondservants, knowing that they will be judged by their Master in heaven. As employees, we are to be submissive to our boss or supervisor where we work, whether he is a saved or unsaved individual. Likewise, Christian supervisors are to be gentle to their employees as obedient sons of God.

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. (1 Peter 2:18-20; cf Isaiah 53:7-9)

A Christian bondservant is commanded to be submissive to his master whether that master is "good and gentle" or "harsh." If the bondservant endures grief and suffering because of a constant harsh master and does not revile against him, then this is commendable to God and leads to the salvation of his soul. Jesus Christ, being our greatest example, did not revile back when he was being accused wrongfully by the Pharisees, but stood silent, despising the shame and enduring the Cross.

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return, when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. (1 Peter 2:21-23)

Likewise, Philemon had the opportunity to extend forgiveness, love and grace to his slave, just as God did by sending His Son to die for us while we were yet His enemies.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us...For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:8-10)

It is therefore apparent that we should be submissive to harsh masters, "for to this you were called." Suffering always precedes glory. This is a requirement of faithful obedience to the commands of Scripture in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Therefore "suffering wrongfully" (suffering for doing right) involves putting to death the deeds of the flesh so as not to react in a reviling way. In this way, we are walking according to the Spirit and this is pleasing to God.

Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ.

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.
(Colossians 3:22-4:1)

If we are walking according to the flesh, "suffering wrongfully" would be an extremely difficult thing to do. However, if we allow the Spirit to control our actions when we are accused wrongfully, knowing that we must suffer for the sake of serving Christ and to receive the reward of the inheritance into the kingdom, then it would be easier to do. Focus on Christ when you suffer wrongfully and not on men. The same applies to masters or supervisors. If they are walking according to the flesh, it would be difficult to extend humbleness, gentleness and fairness as equals, but not if they are focusing on the fear of the Lord.

It is clear to see that Onesimus was living according to the flesh when he ran away from his master, because he did not yet have the Spirit in him. But after he became a new man in Christ, he made the choice to return to Philemon and ask for forgiveness. Even so, what is more pleasing to God is if Onesimus, returning as a Christian, experiences harsh treatment from his master and he does not revile back in any way, but stays silent, focusing on the promises of God. The natural response to this would be to retaliate, but retaliation was not Christ's response and neither should it be ours if we are reviled. God says in **1 Corinthians 4:12**, *And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure...*

A Christian's old walk, according to the course of this world, led him to be un-submissive to his master, spouse, or parents, and therefore not obedient to God. But because of his new walk (in the Spirit), he now practices obedience to the Lord and is submissive no matter the circumstance. He desires then to draw near to the salvation of his soul.

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:19)

The Epistle to the Hebrews

In the opening Epistle to the Hebrews, the author does not identify himself and it is left unknown as to who wrote this Letter and when. What we do

know is that the structure of this Letter is quite unique among the Epistles of the New Testament. The author, led by the Breath of God, structures the Letter around five major warnings to Christians. So what is at stake? Obviously, if God presents warnings to His sons then it must mean there is something to lose. What can Christians lose?

The central subject matter surrounding the Hebrew warnings has to do with the salvation of the soul. And these warnings presented by the Spirit of God revert back through the use of Old Testament Scriptures throughout the entire Book of Hebrews.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:1-4)

(Companion Scriptures to **Hebrews 1:1-4** are revealed in **Genesis 1, 2; Colossians 1:15-20; John 1:1-5; 1 John 1:1-7**)

In order to properly understand the reason for these warnings and the enormity of what is at stake, the author of Hebrews directs our attention to God's plans and purposes for His only begotten Firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Heir of all things. **Hebrews 1:1** begins with the foundation, Christ, who, in the beginning, made the worlds and then made man *in His image and likeness* — for this purpose: *to have dominion*. Because of the fall of man, we see God's redemptive work of bringing man back to the purpose for which he was originally created: *to have dominion*. Therefore, these warnings have to do with *firstborn sons and thereby with rulership*.

After the fall, man no longer possessed the image and likeness of God because of sin. As a three-part being, man's spirit died, the soul became corrupted and the body began to decay. Adam and the Woman lost their

covering of glory and found themselves naked. And because their spirit was dead, they were no longer in the three-part "image" of God. Furthermore, they no longer had the covering of glory, which denotes the purpose of their creation: *to have dominion or to rule*, therefore they no longer possessed the "likeness" of God.

For this reason, God began his redemptive work with the sacrificial death and shed blood of a lamb, using the skin as a covering for Adam and the Woman. The sacrificial death and shed blood of a substitute lamb had always been the means for covering sin as recorded in **Hebrews 9:22**,

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Then, God created his firstborn son, Israel, through adoption. Throughout the generations thereafter, Israel fell into disobedience. Their redemption out of Egypt required the death of a lamb and the placing of blood over the doorposts in order for death to pass over them. But regardless of their salvation, Israel continued in disobedience. God then sent His only begotten Son to minister to Israel so that they may be restored and fulfill God's purpose for them: *to have dominion*. But Israel rejected this offer and their Messiah. Therefore, Christ laid down his life as the substitute Lamb to take away the sins of the whole world, to save His people from death.

Jesus Christ came in the flesh as a humble Servant of God, made lower than the angels (*You have made him a little lower than the angels- Hebrews 2:7*), so that He could lay down his life as the sacrificial Lamb, enduring the horrific task of being humiliated, persecuted, and nailed on the tree for the sake of not just covering sin, but taking away sin once and for all. Because of His death (and our faith), we have our eternal salvation secure. And because of His resurrection, we have been given the opportunity to have life in the Millennial kingdom, *to have dominion* with Christ.

Christ's death and shed blood made possible the creation of the Church, God's adopted firstborn son (a positional standing to be revealed yet future.) For those who overcome, they will be adopted into the kingdom as "firstborn sons" of God--- for only firstborn sons can rule and reign. *For the goal that was set before Him*, Jesus Christ suffered and died

knowing that His obedience to God would result in obtaining His inheritance as King-Priest on that Seventh Day.

At this present time, He is seated at the right hand of the Father: "*Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.*" Christ is presently ministering as our High Priest according to the order of Aaron. He will occupy the position of King-Priest in the order of Melchizedek during the Messianic Era. In the Old Testament, Melchizedek, a type of Christ, was king-priest of Salem (meaning "king of peace").

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul...where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 6:19, 20)

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man...

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. (Hebrews 8:1-6)

Christ, through His Word, ministers to us all things surrounding the inheritance of the kingdom, in order that we may obtain it just as He did. Furthermore, He has left us His Spirit to guide us into all truth and to lead us into all righteousness, which will be able to save our soul on that coming Day. Because of Christ, we now possess the "image" of God again, our spirit made alive. The moment we believed in Christ, God breathed the Holy Spirit into our spirit. We now have the "image" (a tripartite being) but we lack the "likeness" of God, which is our glorified body, and this will not take place unless we have been found worthy at the Judgment seat of Christ on that Day.

At present, Christ is our Mediator, making intercession for us when we sin. When we confess our sins, He is just to forgive us our sins.

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Christ came in the likeness of man, *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, but without sin, apart from the covering of glory. He was sent to Earth as the “*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” so that He through death could destroy Satan and the power of death. Christ’s death fulfilled God’s will and was accepted for man’s eternal redemption. And because Jesus suffered in the flesh He can relate and provide aid to us when we suffer and are tempted by Satan.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:14-18)

Christ is anticipating that Day when His role as King-Priest over the earth will be manifested. His work in the Millennium will be to destroy all unrighteousness, to rule and reign until “*He has put all things under His feet.*” The last enemy who shall be destroyed is Death. Once this has been completed, covering a period of one thousand years, then the kingdom will be delivered up to God the Father for the Eternal Ages beyond **(1 Corinthians 15:24-28)**.

What does this Day mean for Christians? For those who overcome, Christ promises that He will grant them His glory, sharing the throne with Him in the kingdom of the heavens and being exalted above the angels on that Seventh Day. When Christ takes the scepter of rulership from Satan and his fallen angels, immediately before the Millennial Kingdom, the whole purpose of man’s creation will be fulfilled. Angels were never in God’s plans to rule and reign forever. This was God’s purpose for man. Angels were meant to be *ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who*

will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). Perhaps Satan knowing this, out of envy and pride, fell and took one-third of the angels with him. And for this reason, he is going to and fro the earth, deceiving and tempting Christians, for he knows that he has little time left.

Following the Messianic Era, Christ will continue to reign as King-Priest, not just over the earth but over the entire heavens on *the throne of God and of the Lamb [Revelation 22:1-3]*. The overcomers will continue to occupy the throne with Him *[Revelation 21:5]* and Christ will also continue to rule over *the throne of his father David over the house of Jacob forever [Luke 1:32, 33]*.

This is God's awesome plan and purpose. Such an *enormous* offer we have been granted! Even so, many will take this offer lightly and many will fall away after they have received this offer. Hence, we are given the warnings. These warnings simply have to do with different facets of teaching surrounding Christians either realizing or not realizing the inheritance of the firstborn at a future time. And the Lord presents examples drawn from the experiences of the Israelites as they either realized or failed to realize the inheritance of the firstborn in past time.

The first of the five major warnings in this Epistle deals with "*SO GREAT A SALVATION.*" It is not the salvation we presently possess, the salvation of our spirit, the free gift of Eternal life, but the salvation that is to come, the salvation of our souls, which requires our faithful obedience to God's Word in order to inherit.

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:1-4)

If we do not *give the more earnest heed* to all that the Lord Jesus Christ taught during His ministry concerning the coming Seventh Day and the establishment of the heavenly kingdom (with Christ as the Head and His

coheirs sharing His throne), then we run the risk of *drifting away* and thereby neglecting or caring nothing for this *so great a salvation*. This neglect will inevitably result in the greatest loss ever imagined.

What does it mean *to give the more earnest heed* to this *so great a salvation*? This phrase can be translated to say:

"We must superabundantly pay attention to this so mighty a salvation," or it can also be translated to say, *"We must more frequently hold the mind to this so vast a salvation."*

(Strong's # G4056, G4337 and G5082)

If we keep this great salvation in our hearts and minds daily, then we are walking in the right path, seeking the kingdom first and producing good works, allowing us to one day realize this *"so great a salvation."* But if we do not focus on this great salvation daily, then the Word says that we will neglect it and drift away, so that eventually we care nothing for it. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on the coming kingdom, then we will fall back into the world, into Satan's territory. This is why our cares are not to be of this world, but on things above.

Numerous examples set forth in the Old Testament with the nation of Israel are given for our admonition. The saved Jews, who believed God and put the blood over the doorposts, were delivered out of Egypt, passing through dry land and up from out of the waters (depicting baptism), were offered the land of promise flowing with milk and honey *if* they were obedient to the commands of God. But Israel did not give the more earnest heed to their great salvation and this led to their transgressions and disobedience. They turned away from their inheritance, reverting to sin. And because of this, they received their just reward -- destruction and loss of inheritance. Did they escape their judgment? No! Therefore, the answer to the question: *"how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"* is "we won't."

We have been given the Word and the indwelling Holy Spirit to include the fruits (**Galatians 5:22**) and gifts of the Holy Spirit (ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading and showing mercy: **Romans 12:1-8**), to apply to our hearts and minds daily. We have no excuses. If we fail to apply and we drift away, we will be left speechless at the end of the age. An example of this very thing is set forth in the parable of the wedding feast:

So he (Christ) said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:12-14)

We must continually focus on the enormous sacrifice God made of His Son because He loved us and is faithful to keep His plans and promises. Therefore, we must be faithful to Him. We must love Him by not neglecting this So Great a Salvation, for if we do then at the Judgment seat Christ may say,

"Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent." (Revelation 2:4, 5)

Rather, let us faithfully work in pleasing God through the Spirit and in keeping our focus on the inheritance out ahead. If we do, we will hear His words at the Judgment seat proclaiming,

"Well done good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matthew 25:23)

"You have been faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10b)

The second of the five major warnings concerning "So Great a Salvation" is directed to: *"holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling..."* We can determine within the context of this second warning that God is addressing *Christians of the heavenly calling*. We can further understand this calling by drawing from the type, *Israel's earthly calling*.

This warning uses examples from the Old Testament surrounding the nation of Israel to show how they lost their inheritance and did not enter His rest. Many theologians teach that first generation Israel was a lost

people, but this is entirely not so. The nation of Israel was saved as recorded in the following Scriptures:

So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. (Exodus 14:30, 31)

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.

For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ, But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (1 Corinthians 10:1-5)

The Israelites are God's chosen people, His firstborn sons, but because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience, the Lord banned them from entering the Promised Land. God judged them for being unfaithful to Him.

Because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. (Numbers 14:22, 23)

The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the Land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. (Numbers 14:29-31)

These things became our examples, we (Christians) also having been redeemed by the blood. The warnings given to Israel are no different for

Christians ---- if we fail to be faithful to God's Word, we also will surely not enter the Promised Land, the heavenly land to which we have been called.

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:6-12)

Judgment fell upon the people of Israel and it will fall upon Christians as well. When our focus and love for other things in this world takes precedence over Christ, then we are committing idolatry, such as the love of money, selfish ambitions, material possessions, and the like. At Christ's second coming, most Christians will be busy eating, drinking and playing just as Israel did before judgment fell upon them.

Throughout the entire Word, God makes it clear that a condition must be met in order to partake of the inheritance. This condition is "*faithful obedience to His Word.*"

And they have not known My ways. So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest. (Hebrews 3:10, 11)

This "rest" relates back to the beginning of **Genesis 2:1-3**, patterned after the six days of work, followed by a Seventh Day of rest which God blessed and sanctified, as it pointed to the future Sabbath Rest, the Messianic Era and the establishment of the kingdom of the heavens. If we are to enter His rest, enter the Millennial kingdom to come, we must take His Word very seriously. Entering into this future rest currently requires

diligent work on the Spirit-filled Christian, allowing the Holy Spirit to govern his life continually.

The first warning is about neglecting *So Great a Salvation*, the salvation of the soul. The second warning is about failing to be "doers of the Word." A doer of the Word is one who is faithfully obedient to God's Word -- such as being set apart from the world, living holy, exhorting and teaching others in the faith, suffering for Christ's sake, and dying to flesh. Failing to do these things will result in one not entering His Seventh day of rest.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. (Hebrews 4:1)

It is only through the knowledge of His Word that we can realize what it is we need to do and what is at stake. The fear of not entering His rest will motivate us to work hard at being found worthy. This is the fear of the Lord, the fear of standing before Him in judgment on that future Day.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:13)

The third of the five major warnings to Christians simply magnifies the importance of the previous warnings concerning "So Great a Salvation" and gives the consequence for falling away. In **Hebrews 5:12**, importance is stressed in continuing our maturity in the meat of the Word, the Word of the kingdom. The author was addressing a group of Christians who at one time had been advancing towards spiritual maturity, but had regressed to the point of being spiritually immature once again; and was incapable of understanding anything but milk. The author warns the Church about the dangers of an immature spiritual condition. Though they had plenty of time to continue in the faith and to teach others, they remained complacent in their knowledge. Their negligence resulted in them needing to be taught again "*the principles of the oracles of God*," which is based on the foundation set forth in the beginning account of **Genesis**, having to do with an inheritance on the seventh Day. Their regression was due to their carelessness and unbelief in the Word of the Kingdom, only desiring the milk of the Word. But they were warned that milk was not sufficient to produce good works acceptable to God.

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (Hebrews 5:13)

The milk of the Word pertains to the gospel of grace. The Church was seen repeatedly discussing *"the elementary principles of Christ,"* which is the beginning point of a new believer's faith. The elementary principles of Christ were revealed to be the doctrine of baptisms, of healings and blessings, and repentance from dead works (sin). The Church regressed, speaking repeatedly of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment for unsaved individuals; and failed to continue in the faith and teach Christians about their resurrection, purpose and judgment for the Messianic Era.

There is a real danger for Christians who do not diligently continue in the Word of the kingdom, if they fall away and commit the sin of unbelief — God may never permit them to “move on” to maturity. Therefore, the author urges the Church not to remain complacent, but to leave the basics and *go on to perfection.*

Solid food, or the meat of the Word, brings one to a level of maturity, to the deep things of God. This enables a Christian to realize an inheritance and to know the rules pertaining to the qualification of this inheritance. Furthermore, the meat of the Word enables the Christian to discern both good and evil. The Christian is able to discern between true and false messages and gain strength and protection against spiritual warfare.

The progression of the Word does not end until death or rapture. One must continually prepare himself and remain focused on the goal out ahead. The peril of not progressing or remaining focused on this “so great a salvation” is very serious for Christians. The following Scripture is the third warning of **Hebrews 6:4-6**:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Christians who were once enlightened are those who possess the full knowledge (*epignosis*), the Word of the kingdom. They have tasted the heavenly gift, meaning they possess the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Next, they have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, meaning they have allowed the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and righteousness. They also have tasted the good Word of God; therefore they are skilled in the Word of righteousness. Last, they have tasted the powers of the age to come, meaning they are skilled in the knowledge of prophecy --- particularly, in the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.

Then, after they have been given this incredible offer and gift of knowledge, if they fall away from “the faith,” God says it will be *impossible* to restore them again to repentance. The word, “fall away,” refers to deliberate “apostasy” (*a defection from the faith*). To turn back is a slap in the face to God. It is as though they crucify Jesus Christ all over again and put Him to an open shame. Therefore, severe judgment awaits one who willfully forsakes. Even though they repent (change their mind), God will *not* change His mind. The severity of their judgment will be great at the Judgment seat of Christ.

A regression from that which they had once believed to a point where they turned away from their inheritance and what God had said can be seen in the example presented with Israel refusing to go into the land that God had given over to them as an inheritance. Then, in **Numbers 14:39-42**, having realized what they had done Israel repented and later chose to move into the land to receive their inheritance, but God would not permit them to do so. Though they repented, the Lord would not permit them to inherit because they had crossed over a boundary from which there was no return. The same applies to Christians. God will not permit them to make that journey to the kingdom if they fall away, *if* they have reached a point of no return, regardless if they repent. If they have not reached a point of no return, then God *may* permit them to move on. God’s lack of permission is in direct response to our choices. We must never “fall away” or apostatize.

The Books of **second Peter** and **Jude** cover great detail concerning apostasy. Peter describes the strict judgment that these apostates will receive from the Lord in **2 Peter 2:20-22**:

For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb:

“A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Throughout the Word of God there are many warnings concerning apostasy and the dangerous consequence that it poses. Every mature Christian has the potential to fall away from the faith and this is the reason the Word *pleads* with us to maintain our focus and hope on the upward call of Jesus.

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:10-12)

The fourth warning in Hebrews 10:26 surround the judgment of Christians in a more intense manner than the previous warning. After we have been given the mature knowledge of the kingdom we are *"to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."* And then we are *"to consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope” means to hold firm (to anticipate with every fiber of our being) the confident expectation of the future Millennial kingdom. Then we are to *“stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”* and this we are to do because of the tremendous impact believers can have on each other. This

is the reason why the author exhorts believers who are like-minded to gather together. “Exhorting” means coming alongside and inspiring one another with the Truth.

If we do not do these things, then we are weakening our defense system against the evil one and in time we may be led astray. Without even realizing, we can fall away and once again be intertwined with the things of the world until we are completely withdrawn from the faith. Then we have committed the willful sin, the deliberate sin of apostasy, for which there is no repentance.

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26, 27)

This warning is not directed to immature Christians, but to those who are mature. It is directed towards Christians who have the full knowledge of the Truth, the Word of the kingdom, and then apostatize. In order to distinguish the severity of this punishment surrounding this “willful sin,” the author first directs the attention to the nation of Israel and their idolatry. When any Israelite rejected the Law of Moses he was sentenced to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Keeping this in mind, the attention then reverts to “the willful sin.”

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he (Christian) be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29)

The judgment for Israel’s idolatry was death by stoning. If idolatry was punished with physical death, how much worse punishment should someone receive who treats the Word of Christ with disrespect? Apostates are regarded as those who consider the blood of Christ of no value or of little importance — a common thing, as in any ordinary man’s or animal’s sacrifice.

Apostates who have committed this willful sin have insulted the Spirit of grace, who teaches us all things pertaining to godly wisdom. A believer

who commits this “willful sin” of apostasy will be judged with a punishment worse than physical death. And to have deliberately committed this sin and then stand before the Lord at His Judgment seat will be the most terrifying experience. We see this in **Hebrews 10:30, 31**:

For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Therefore, we must engage this warning in a very serious manner. We must be strong in the Lord so that we do not apostatize. If we remain steadfast, having done the will of God, He will reward us.

“For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:37-39)

The fifth and final warning of Hebrews 12:25 is revealed following the examples of the heroes of faith from chapter **eleven** and the race of faith from chapter **twelve**. All of these heroes were faithfully obedient to God’s Word, looking beyond their present world to a heavenly inheritance. Though the promise of the heavenly inheritance was not received during their lifetime, they were assured of it, remaining faithful until death.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

The testimony of Abraham, as well as the other heroes of faith, is an example written for our admonition. Christians are to take these examples and to model the faith of these heroes. *Faith* is simply believing everything God says in His Word. This is true faith; this is Scriptural faith. Faith means trusting fully in God’s promises and in Christ’s return.

And because we believe in His Word, we obey His commandments. Faithful obedience on the part of the hearers of His Word will be the basis in which Christians will be evaluated at the Judgment seat of Christ. This will determine if they will receive rewards in the kingdom or not.

When we have faith in Christ's return and the coming kingdom, we are motivated to obey and endure. This hope instills a mindset of receiving Christ's grandest share of estate. There is also the present hope of seeing Jesus Christ in His glory face to face and sharing life with Him in His kingdom. This is the reason why we run the race with endurance and perseverance. This is why we endure trials and suffering. This is also why we endure chastening from God, more so because God does it for our profit, so that we may be prepared as partakers of His holiness. All this may be painful to us at present, but afterwards it will yield its rewards. Consider it a competitive race that you are training for. The training and competition may be painful, but afterwards it seems well worth the efforts when you receive the rewards with great enthusiasm.

Overcomers will be surrounded with a glorious company in the kingdom of the heavens, as **Hebrews 12:22-24** so describes,

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Yet, in knowing of this tremendous offer, there are some who will ignore it, fall away and reject it. This brings in the fifth warning, which is a command for Christians to hear His Word and not reject it.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth;

but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates

the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. (Hebrews 12:25-27)

Christians who fall away and reject the Word of the kingdom, who stop their ears from listening to the voice of God, shall not escape their judgment at the Judgment seat of Christ, but shall be removed from the kingdom for one thousand years. Like Esau, who lost his inheritance, *who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. (Hebrews 12:16b, 17)*

The fear of the Lord should be reason alone to not disrespect Him. An example of what this fear looks like is shown with the nation of Israel during the Exodus. If the intensity of God's voice which shook the earth during that time caused fear in the hearts of the Israelites because of their unfaithfulness, how much more will the magnitude of His voice which will shake both heaven and earth produce terror in the hearts of unfaithful Christians on that Day?

For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29)

Although the warnings are severe, they are just and they should produce an incentive to remain faithful. Following these five strict warnings, the writer of Hebrews encourages the readers to "run with endurance" and exhorts them to keep the faith and persevere. This Letter is one of motivation and admonition. Let us therefore comfort ourselves with knowing that God is always faithful with His promises.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Let us constantly bring to mind, *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Hebrews 12:28)*

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

During the time James wrote his Epistle, the Church was made up mostly of Jews who became Christians. This was the beginning of Church history

when very few Gentiles were added to the Church. Jerusalem was the place where the Church began and was the center of Christian worship in those first few years. James became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem during this time. The Book of **James** is one of the oldest Books in the New Testament. This is why this Epistle is addressed *to the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad*, to Christians living outside of Palestine. James wanted to encourage and exhort the converted Jews who had been scattered amongst the Gentile nations because of ongoing persecution. Therefore, James begins his Epistle to Christians who were by birth Jews, exhorting them to be strong in the faith and endure trials. "*Patient endurance during trials*" was the center of James' message surrounding the salvation of the soul. Trials are testing's of our faith which produces strength, patience and maturity:

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:2-5)

Why were the scattered Christians to consider their trials as *all joy*? These trials were for the testing of their faith to bring them to a level of maturity in order to prepare them as king-priests for the coming kingdom.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10)

Exercising patience is the manner in which we are to endure trials. The Greek definition for *patience* (Strong's #G5281) is "cheerful or hopeful endurance; constancy."

In **Hebrews 6:11, 12**, we see that having this "living hope" of a glorified future with Christ will help us to maintain the faith and patience we need to endure these trials:

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

We are to establish and hold fast the hope of glory in our hearts and minds, looking unto the coming of the Lord.

Therefore, be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (James 5:7, 8)

We are to set our minds strictly on things above and not on things of this world. The world deters us from our heavenly inheritance and provokes us to embrace deceitful lusts. One of these deceitful lusts is the love of money. The desire and love for riches only leads to destruction; *He who trusts in his riches will fall (Proverbs 11:28)*.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

Those who desire to be rich lack godliness and contentment which leaves a hole filled with greed. This greed drives individuals into temptation, snares, and foolish and harmful lusts. Paul was painting a graphic word-picture of a greedy person drowning under the tremendous weight of material desires. In actuality, worldly wealth brings a false sense of security for it quickly passes away, as no one can carry anything out of this world. A life focused on material things produces only pain. But true riches are in the heavenly kingdom, which are secure and will last forever. James provided the following warning to the rich and those who desire worldly wealth:

Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. (James 1:9, 10)

Money in and of itself is not the problem, but the love of money is. The love of money can drive a person to do evil. It causes Christians to be blinded by greed and materialism to such a degree that they lose focus on the Lord. Greediness may even cause a believer to stray away from the faith completely.

This warning is given to those whose desire and love of money is greater than the desire and love of God. Rich men or those who desire worldly wealth are self-seeking, greedy, and carnal. They care nothing for God's heavenly riches or to know Him. Their pursuits are strictly for storing up treasure for themselves and living a life of pleasure and luxury. The end result for them is this—that *the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. (James 1:11)*

A picture of the rich man is presented by Jesus in **Luke 12:15-21** in the parable of the rich fool:

And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Then He spoke a parable to them, saying:

"The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'

But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

In the parable of the rich fool, the rich man is described as being self-centered, involved with the world and all its lusts. His main concern was

his wealth; therefore at the Judgment seat of Christ, he will lose his soul for age-lasting life.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

God commands that we abstain from worldly lusts and fleshly desires. The desire and love of money derives from the lust of the flesh and is not of God but of the world and therefore of the god of this world — Satan. Jesus says,

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24)

Part of our sanctification involves being set apart from the world to pursue godliness. The poor man, or the brother of humble circumstances, does not lust over worldly wealth. He is a humble servant of God and seeks Him first above material possessions. He is content with what he has and is not self-seeking, but seeks to help others in need. And this is the direction an overcomer is to take, to *let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.* (**Hebrews 13:5**)

Note what Jesus says in comparing the rich man to the poor man:

“Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God....But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” (Luke 6:20, 24)

Another cross-reference passage can be seen in **Luke 18:18-25**:

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery; Do not murder; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Honor your father and your

mother.” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

The rich ruler is not asking about receiving the free gift of Eternal life. He already possesses spirit salvation because he knows the commandments and he tells Jesus that he has followed them. The young ruler is asking about the *inheritance* (soul salvation); he uses the word “*inherit*” eternal [age-lasting] life. He realizes that he lacks the qualification to inherit and Jesus makes him aware that it is because the man’s focus is on his riches.

But the young ruler was not willing to give up all and follow Christ. His heart and soul remained in his riches and worldly possessions. The focus presented here is that we not covet or desire worldly riches but that we desire to follow Christ. If we have been blessed with riches, we are to give to those in need. Our goal should be to live as humble servants of God. Our actions will discover our condition on that future Day of the Lord. We can choose to either live for the desires of the flesh or live for Christ — we cannot choose both. Satan, through his “tares,” has deceived many Christians into believing that God desires we seek worldly wealth in *this* age in order to obtain happiness. But this is a lie of the devil. In doing so, the Christian’s primary focus becomes self-centered, desiring only the things of this world.

We must overcome trials by dying to flesh and walking according to the Spirit. Do not be deceived into thinking that someone else’s pathway is easier than your own. Such thinking would be contrary to the evidence of Scripture, for Scripture repeatedly says that *all* Christians must go through tribulations and must endure in order to enter the kingdom of God:

...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in “the faith”, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

Resist him (Satan), steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Peter 5:9, 10)

Everyone experiences trials and tribulations in their life as a test of their faith towards God. Temptations, trials, tests and tribulations carry nearly the same meaning and falls upon every individual for two reasons: One, to be tested with a solicitation to evil (by Satan) and two, with a solicitation to faith and righteousness in order to strengthen (allowed by God). It is Satan who attacks and tempts with trials and tribulations under God’s control. We have the choice whether to follow our flesh or the Spirit. When we are drawn away from God by our own desires, this produces sin and we are overcome. But when we remain faithful during trials, we are strengthened and we overcome. Trials produce strength and maturity through faith. And the greater the faith is, the greater the trials may be. This moves us from faith to faith and from glory to glory. **James 1:12-15** reveals that temptations are a test of our faith.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God;” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (separation from God).

If necessary, God allows Satan to tempt believers to test their faith, but God Himself does not tempt. God can only act in one way: He can only act righteously. There is no evil in God — therefore, He cannot tempt for evil. He cannot choose evil. What God does do is provide everything we

need in order to overcome. The Scriptures have been given to us, the mysteries of the Kingdom opened to us and the admonition of the Lord made available to us through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit in order for us to be victorious in the race of the faith. These are His good and perfect gifts, holy and acceptable, which is the Word of truth, the knowledge of the kingdom.

In summary, tests or trials in Scripture come in two forms. First, God uses trials in connection with the maturing process, always for good, with a view to the Christian being approved at the Judgment seat of Christ. Second, Satan tempts individuals in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian's life.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (James 1:16-18)

The qualities needed under trials and tribulations are these good and perfect gifts that God provides. We must hear them, through the Word of truth, and then do them. But first we must lay aside all filthiness and wickedness, to include pride, wrath, and evil speaking in order to receive the Word of the kingdom with meekness.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

The Greek definition for *filthiness* (Strong's #G4507) is "dirtiness; unclean; unrighteous;" in the moral sense it means to be dirty minded or carnally minded. In **Romans 8:7**, we see that the carnally minded, the mind of the flesh, is an enemy of God because it can never submit itself to His commandments. And because a carnally minded Christian has a dulled spiritual perception, he will be restricted from receiving the Word of God in a proper manner. The Christian must put away the carnal and renew his spiritual mind so that he is morally clean.

In this way, he will be able to receive the Word of truth. In addition, the Christian is to lay aside the overflow of wickedness in his life. The Greek

definition for *overflow* (Strong's #H7857) means “to gush; to inundate; to drown” and “wickedness” (Strong's #G4189) means “to plot; vicious; evil; to harm.” This denotes an extreme measure of sin. Transformation must take place from the “old man” to a “new man in Christ” in order to receive the implanted Word. The word *implanted* means “to place on the inside.”

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16, 17)

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26)

The indwelling Holy Spirit teaches us *all* things pertaining to His plan and purpose for us. When we have fixated our minds in the Word, laying aside the old man and transforming to the new spiritual man, then the indwelling Holy Spirit can assist us to grow spiritually. This enables us to do good works and to overcome trials.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

During trials, we are to trust in the Lord and be bountiful in prayer that He will make the way of escape; that we may be able to bear it and overcome. It is our faith and works, our faithful obedience to God's word, which will bring about our justification at the Judgment seat of Christ. Faith and works go hand in hand; faith produces works; and works makes faith perfect, meaning “mature” or “complete.” Our works is a declaration of our faith, just as baptism is a declaration of our faith — both relative to the salvation of our soul.

When the Lord allowed Abraham to be tested with the sacrifice of his son, Isaac, Abraham reveals remarkable faith knowing that God would provide

a substitute. Because of Abraham's faithful obedience, God was faithful with His promises to him.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2:21-23)

In connection with the saving of the soul, James deals extensively with *faith* and *works*. The passage in **James 2:23** deals with Christians relative to faithfulness and the millennial kingdom, not with the unsaved relative to eternal verities. "Works" emanate out of faithfulness, something which can only occur among those who are spiritually alive, able to act by faith in God. The Epistle of **James** pertains to the saved, not the unsaved. By faith, Christians have the ability to produce good works, with the proffered kingdom in view. And by faith, Christians have the ability to endure trials, realizing an inheritance with Christ in the coming kingdom.

We have Christ as our greatest example. Immediately before Christ began His ministry, He asked John the Baptist to baptize Him. John tried to prevent this, but Jesus said to him in **Matthew 3:15**,

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Christ was setting the pattern, showing us the Way to the kingdom. A believer must acknowledge his commitment to be faithfully obedient (faith and works) to the Lord for inclusion into the coming kingdom.

Immediately after His baptism, God permitted Satan to tempt Jesus. With each temptation, Jesus did not condemn Satan, but rather drew near to God by quoting the Scriptures.

These temptations proved that Jesus was the eternal Son of God, our Redeemer, absolutely incapable of sin. Through suffering, Jesus was faithful to the end, even to His death. We also must suffer and endure through trials to prove our worthiness to God.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:1, 2)

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

...that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. (1 Thessalonians 3:3)

Observing how Christ handled His trials and sufferings give us insight as to how we may endure our trials. This is part of every Christian's calling, a condition that must be met in order to be partakers with Christ. Therefore, trials should come as no surprise to those who are mature.

If a Christian is well armed (being led by the Holy Spirit) against the temptations of the devil (temptations through the lusts of the flesh) he will be delivered by God. His prayer should be that God "...not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (**Matthew 6:13**). However, if the Christian is not well armed, God may not assist in delivering him. Trials come to all. God allows trials for good, in order to refine, restore and strengthen with a view to one's future redemption. Yet, Satan tempts for the purpose of making the Christian succumb to evil.

The Word of God is our defense against Satan's temptations and is able to prepare us when trials come our way. Through the practice of abiding in God's commandments, we will learn to put away our old self so that during our trials, the practical righteousness of God will be evident in our lives. A part of this involves putting away the evil tongue.

But no one can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:8-10)

Only through the work of the Holy Spirit within us can we bring this destructive force under control. James was speaking primarily to teachers, warning them that they shall receive a stricter judgment. These pastor-teachers used their tongue to gain praise for themselves, spoke lies against the Word and boasted about things they did not know. The root of this unruly tongue stems from pride. Paul referred to this wisdom as demonic; doctrines of demons.

But Christians who speak wisdom that is “from above” is done in meekness, in truth and without hypocrisy. Scripture is very clear that every Christian will have serious consequence if he maintains an unruly tongue. In reference to the Judgment seat of Christ, the Lord says this in **Matthew 12:37**,

“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

God knows our heart. The true condition of our heart will inevitably be revealed by what comes out of our mouth. And according to James, we cannot condemn or revile our brother one moment and bless God the next. No matter how passionately we bless or praise God, if we speak evil of our brother, our praising and blessing of God is a lie.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

We can see then, that nothing good filters out of an evil and prideful heart. It was because of pride that God’s anointed cherub, Satan, whom He made to be ruler of this age, fell away.

You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned. Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. (Ezekiel 28:16, 17)

Therefore, pride and an unruly tongue cause all kinds of evil and sin. When the tongue continually condemns other believers, they are placing judgment on what they do not know. This is someone who continually speaks evil of other believers because they harbor ill feelings of jealousy, envy, pride or a hardened heart. Putting to death the flesh enables us to refrain from speaking evil or condemning others, rather we are to speak in love and humility. Even if a believer wanders from the truth and reverts back to the world, we are not to speak evil of or condemn him but we are to bring him back in a loving and humble way, so as to save his soul from death in the coming age.

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19, 20)

But there is something often misunderstood — the act of habitually judging others for the sake of evilness or to condemn (**James 4:11**) is entirely different from the Church's responsibility to judge carnal works within its members (**1 Corinthians 6:2**) or the ability to discern between true or false messages from pastor-teachers (**Hebrews 5:14; 2 Peter 3:17**). **1 Thessalonians 5:21** and **1 John 4:1** clearly states that we are to *not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Let us therefore understand that everyone will experience trials and tribulations throughout their lifetime. But the good news is that the Lord will bless those who are faithfully obedient in the midst of trials and suffering. Blessings will come in the way of an abundant entrance into the future heavenly kingdom!

The Epistles of Peter

Christ commissioned Peter to witness to the Jews and together with Paul to build the Church.

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
(Matthew 16:15-19)

This moment revealed the establishment of the Church and that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God* to the disciples. And this moment marked not only the revealing of Christ and the creation of the Church, but the revealing of “the mystery” (*“the mystery” is the Church being the recipient to the offer of the heavenly kingdom*) to Peter and the other disciples. Jesus based Peter’s confession — “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*”— as the foundation or the rock in which the Church would be built upon. Christ is “The Rock” (**Habakkuk 1:12; 1 Corinthians 10:11**). Hades will not prevail over the Church; the Church having victory in Christ. At Christ’s second coming, those who are chosen from among the Church will be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven to rule and reign over the earth. In the future, Death and Hades will be destroyed.

After six days from this announcement, Jesus took Peter, James and John up to a “*high mountain*” (depicting the kingdom) and was “*transfigured before them.*” (Christ showed them His glory [**Matthew 17:2**]). This revelation on the Mount occurred “*after six days*” which is the seventh day and is a picture of God’s timeframe in His dealings with man (The 6th Day or Man’s day) to the Millennium (The 7th Day or The Day of the Lord). Peter, James and John were given the vision of the future kingdom and of the glory of Christ as King. In addition, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, which revealed the future rapture and resurrection of the saints and the redemption of man. Just as Moses was resurrected on the third

day during the resurrection of Christ (**Matthew 27:51**) and Elijah was raptured by God on the third day (**2 Kings 2:11**), so also will Christians be removed from the earth by resurrection or rapture on the Third Day (the third one-thousandth year from Pentecost). Peter, James and John were shown this great and wondrous event on the Mount!

This event led Peter some thirty years later to begin his Epistles with a view to the Lord's return, the establishment of His kingdom, and a heavenly inheritance --- the salvation of the soul.

...yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:9)

Peter addresses the Churches in Asia and opens his Epistle summarizing the whole purpose for Christ's death and resurrection — the salvation of the soul. It was Peter's commission to introduce the Word of the kingdom so that the Churches would arrive at a level of maturity and prepare themselves for their inheritance. Peter opens his Epistle with blessings to God for His abundant mercy in providing man with this great salvation. This salvation was dependent on Christ's death and resurrection. *His death and shed blood* provided the means to wipe away our sins and grant us spirit salvation, the gift of Eternal life. Furthermore, *His resurrection* provided the possibility for us to inherit the kingdom, the offer of Millennial life.

We have been born again. Our first birth was our physical birth, born without the Spirit — *born dead in trespasses and sin*. In order for us to be able to have access to our inheritance, our soul salvation, it is required after we have believed, that we be *born again*. The phrase *born again* means "*brought forth from above*," and is acknowledged through the act of baptism. When we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we passed from death unto life and our spirit was made alive through the Holy Spirit. Then, we acknowledged our commitment to putting to death the flesh and walking according to the Spirit. This is our new birth, our spiritual birth and thereby we have been born again. The Spirit of the Lord breathes life into our spirit and this provides the assistance we need to acquire soul salvation.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you,

unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
(John 3:3)

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... (Ephesians 2:1, 2, 4, 5)

Therefore, the purpose of our spiritual birth was to give us “*a living hope*” through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (**1 Peter 1:3**). Just as Christ was resurrected to the kingdom in heaven, we also will be resurrected from the dead. He sent us the Holy Spirit as our Helper in guiding us into all truth and teaching us things to come, who is also the guarantee of our inheritance. If we allow, the Holy Spirit enables us to gain understanding and faith in the living hope, which is the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:4, 5)

The word *inheritance* means “heir-ship” or “possession” in the Greek definition (Strong’s #G2817) and signifies a position as joint-heir with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. This means that those who inherit the kingdom will be king-priests with Christ, ruling and reigning from His heavenly throne.

This inheritance has been God’s plan and purpose for man since before the foundation of the world and *has been reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:4)*. But of course, the condition that we remain faithfully obedient to Him until the end must be met. If we act accordingly, on that Day, we

will be found worthy to receive the inheritance. And according to Scripture, those who live by “the faith,” who consistently practice faithful obedience to God, are those *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time* (1 Peter 1:5). In other words, those that have their faith in the power of God will receive the salvation of their souls on that future Day of the Lord.

...that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:5)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:10, 11)

Ephesians 6:14-19 presents the six parts of the spiritual armor of God that we are to put on. Putting on the armor shows that our faith is in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men. The armor of God provides us strength and protection against evil forces. But this armor is not automatic — we must put it on by exercising our faith. (Part five of this chapter presents a further study surrounding the armor of God.)

Peter exhorts the Church to greatly rejoice in the inheritance, even though *now for a little while* (compared to one thousand years!) *if need be, you have been grieved by various trials...* (1 Peter 1:6). Knowing that our strength comes from the power of God, we can withstand any type of trial that comes our way. These trials come our way only “*if need be*”; only if God allows it in order to strengthen our faith.

that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,...
(1 Peter 1:7).

“*Genuineness*” means “to put someone or something to the test.” Therefore, this is saying that our faith now (including our faith under trials) will be tested at the revelation of Jesus Christ and is more valuable than gold that perishes. Our faith will be tested by fire at the Judgment seat of Christ and our hope is that we may be found worthy for praise, honor and glory (*glory* implies “*rulership*”). If our faith is approved, it will have age-lasting and eternal value far beyond what gold can ever

offer. It will result in the salvation of our soul, which **Hebrews** chapter **two** describes as “*so great a salvation*”—the most incredible, the most amazing salvation, too profound to imagine, which eyes have never seen, and in which the all-knowing, all-powerful, loving God has bestowed upon His creation. Nothing, not even all the gold in the world, could compare to this salvation!

Peter had seen the Lord Jesus Christ face to face, and had walked in His presence for three years. He was an eyewitness to His crucifixion and resurrection. This is why Peter loved the Lord, and the Lord saw this love in Peter. For us however, we have not seen Christ. Therefore, our love for Him comes only as a result of our faith and subsequently our obedience to Him. Our faith alone gives us the assurance that we will soon see Him face to face and when we do, we will have such great joy inexpressible as we receive the end of our faith — the salvation of our souls!

Of this salvation (the salvation of the soul) the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy

Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.
(1 Peter 1:10-12)

This great salvation which God ordained before the world began was kept hidden in a “mystery” in past ages (**1 Corinthians 2:6-8**). And though the Old Testament prophets were granted wisdom from the Spirit, along with signs and visions; and prophesied and wrote of this salvation that would in their future be offered to the Church, they did not fully understand what was given to them or when this would take place. God did this for a reason — so that the rulers of this age, who are the powers and the principalities in the heavenly places (Satan and his fallen angels) would not thwart God’s plan and purpose for us. Therefore, this mystery

was concealed from all those who opposed God's plan. So great is this salvation that the prophets inquired and searched carefully to discover when and how this would be brought about.

It was in God's perfect time when it was necessary for Christ to have died, be buried for two days, and then resurrected on the third day to complete the covenant -- to take away our sins in order to have access to the kingdom. This brought about the creation of the Church, the one new man in Christ, and those from among the Church who will be chosen to replace Satan as ruler in the age to come. Now that Christ had accomplished God's plan at Calvary, the hidden mystery was being revealed to the Church by the disciples in order for us to know and prepare for this great salvation. So great is this salvation that the angels have a desire to look into, even though God has prepared them to be ministering spirits made lower than Christ and His bride.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory...But God has revealed them to us through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:7-10)

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:8-11)

...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26, 27)

We can realize then that this *so great a salvation* which has been offered

to us, the Church, is the greatest blessing that we can receive. And in light of this *so great a salvation*, Peter exhorts us to retain it in our hearts and minds daily.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

In view of this great salvation we are to *gird up the loins of our mind* which means to repetitively or constantly put to mind; to invoke a mental exertion, so that we do not drift away. We should continually focus on our future salvation and not allow our minds to be hindered by the cares of this world or anything that would take our minds off of this salvation.

Then we are to *be sober* which means to “be alert; watchful; cautious; discerning,” so that we can be on guard against the enemy who works in many disguises to deceive us. We are to rest our hope on the grace of God and on His Son’s glorious appearing that we may be partakers of His glory. Once we are mature, having the knowledge of the Word of the kingdom, we are to practice faithful obedience to His Word. And His Word says that since we are part of the body of Christ, we are to be holy and set apart as He is. Therefore, our prayer should be: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*” (Psalm 51:10)

To *be holy* requires the act of self-control; a loving, tender, humble attitude and a kind tongue. We need to be cautious of everything we say and do. In this, we are practicing holiness and righteousness. In **1 Peter 1:17**, Peter says to “*conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.*” Our conduct or behavior should reflect the “fear of the Lord,” knowing that He will judge us without partiality, without favoritism, but justly — according to our works. It is a motivating fear that gives us the desire to be overcomers as we do not want to be placed on the outside of the gate. This fear can be best described as this: *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12).*

The fact that Christ paid the price for our redemption by His blood is

another reason that we should not take this salvation lightly. He did not buy us with silver or gold, but with His death and shed blood that was without spot or blemish. And He did this to cleanse us, because our conduct was corrupted. He did this, not because we were friends of God, but while we were enemies of God, because He loved us.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. (Ephesians 2:4, 5)

The good news is that we now have a choice whether we will allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and to conduct our lives in accordance to the Scriptures. We have been set free from past traditions, where in every environment we were exposed to evil, and embraced the evil practices of this world. We now have the choice to repent, forget about past traditions, and conduct our lives according to Christ.

This is what Paul aspired to do, who was a former murderer of Christians, but transformed to a new man in Christ, as seen in **Philippians 3:12-14**:

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected, but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us press forward with a new start, allowing the Spirit to assist us in putting away *all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking as newborn babes...and desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1 Peter 2:1-3).*

Let us desire the pure Word, not corrupted by false doctrine or the traditions of men, but that which comes directly from the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to bring us to a level of maturity and great enthusiasm for the Word. Our enthusiasm will come when we study the Word and experience how God's love and grace is so awesome. And this comes when we understand that He has chosen us to be with Christ as part of His spiritual house.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who call you out of darkness into His marvelous light...

(1 Peter 2:9)

Can we even imagine how glorious and amazing it will be to gather together with Christ in His kingdom, to sing and proclaim praises to Him?

This is why Peter “begs” us, as foreigners here on earth, to consider our heavenly home and do everything possible to conduct our stay here in fear and holy conduct. Our conduct is extremely important, as it reflects on Christ. Since we are the body of Christ, our conduct must be without spot or blemish.

Even if we are condemned by others we are to continue in our good works, our holy conduct, so that on the Lord’s Day they may acknowledge Christ and what He has done through His people. We must be submissive to our leaders, whether to government, our husband, our boss, or our laws here on earth. Even if we have to suffer, not because we did not obey, but for doing good, we must endure. We must remain submissive and holy, that they may be ashamed.

“...knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9b).

But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:14-17)

If we suffer, it is better that we suffer for doing good. For example, let’s say we are suffering because of a harsh boss, or being reviled by another. If we remain meek and do not revile back, then we are following Christ and this is spiritually prosperous for us. This is the example that Christ left us when He suffered wrongfully. He did not revile back, but remained meek and quiet. We also have to partake in Christ’s sufferings as a test of

our faithful obedience. Do not be deceived. We are not exempt from sufferings in this age because we are Christians. Our pain-free life will not come until the next age. So it is better that we suffer for doing good than for doing evil. If we suffer for doing evil, this brings us no profit.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. (1 Peter 4:15, 16)

In the midst of our sufferings, we are to continue to give God the glory, entrusting our lives to Him, knowing that He cares for us and will reward us with *the crown of glory that does not fade away*. For Christ may come at any moment.

But the end of all things is at hand, therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers...as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:7, 10)

In summary, Peter's first Epistle to the Church emphasizes the salvation of the soul. Peter wanted the Church to understand the importance of this salvation and how to acquire it. In Peter's final chapter of his first Epistle, he directs his attention to the elders of the Church. In **1 Peter 5:2-4**, Peter states:

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

The Greek definition for the word *shepherd* (Strong's #G4166) means to "tend, feed, teach; a pastor." Peter was clarifying the duties of the elders of the Church to include the pastor-teacher, exhorting them to willingly teach the flock in accordance with the will of their Master and not for dishonest gain. The pastor-teachers and the elders are not to concern themselves with how many people they can bring into the Church for the building of their funds. Nor are they to sell their ministry inside or outside

of the Church in order to profit from it. Their desire should be to teach their flock according to the Scriptures, holding the mystery of the faith, knowing that it is to their Master alone they will have to give an account. The pastor-teacher is to act and teach in all humility, spirit, and truth.

Peter closes his Epistle warning the Church *to be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world (1 Peter 5:8, 9)*. And one of the ways in which the devil will seek to devour the Christian is revealed in Peter's second Epistle.

Peter's second Epistle centers on the biggest obstacle that a Christian must face: *false teachings*. Peter saw what had happened to the Churches in Asia. Their faith had grown in the Word of the kingdom, but then because of false teachings, they fell away. Most all had turned their backs on the Word of the kingdom and their inheritance! Therefore, Peter knew what extreme danger false teachers posed to the Church. Hence, the warnings are given. Peter's warnings parallel, to a large extent, the warnings in **Jude's Epistle**, which also cautions the readers against false teachers.

Second Peter's content continues with the salvation of the soul with respect to the devil's attack within the Church through the actions of false pastor-teachers. And this is not new, for Peter tells us that there were false prophets long ago amongst believers, just as there are today. Even from the time of Moses, false teachers, who fell away from the faith (concerning their inheritance), drew others away with them. Then again, false teachers arose during the beginning of Church history and were warned against in **Peter's** and **Jude's Epistles**, as they whole-heartedly attempted to destroy the message surrounding the Word of the kingdom.

We can see what a devastation this is when leaders of the Church today turn their flock against God's Word, bringing in false teachings and deceptive practices. How do you think Christ feels when this happens? Before the creation of the Church, at Christ's first advent, false teachings were instilled into the Jewish people by the scribes and Pharisees, as seen in **Matthew 23:13-15**. Jesus reprimanded them, saying,

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut

up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."

False teachings have continued within the Church throughout this dispensation. According to **2 Peter 2:1**, these false teachers "*secretly bring in destructive heresies.*" The Greek definition for the word *secretly* means "to bring in alongside." Therefore, the work of false pastor-teachers could be recognized as this: *they teach what is scripturally correct, but then alongside the truth they would introduce heresies or their own opinion that is contrary to Scripture.* If this is followed by their flock, it would lead to a false belief and understanding of the Word, that which would ultimately bring about their destruction. Many individuals will seek to draw Christians away from the central teaching of Scripture — the salvation of the soul. The *doctrines of demons*, promulgated by false teachers, are the most dangerous and deadly teaching that has ever been proclaimed. And, because of this, Peter and Jude exhorted Christians to strain every fiber of their being in the race of "the faith," so that they do not fall away or succumb to these false teachings. Satan will use everything in his power to bring down faithful believers.

Jesus warned us in **Matthew 13:19**, in the parable of the sower, about "*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom...*" The believer will be strayed away from the truth in several ways. Satan does all he can to prevent those who hear the Word of the kingdom from maturing and producing fruit; either by stealing the Word before it can take root, or by causing the one who hears it to give up before they have a mature foundation through the cares of this world or through the deceitfulness of riches. But there are some believers who do hear the Word of the kingdom and do mature and begin to produce fruit — these are the overcomers.

Keep in mind that the false teachers of the past and the present proclaim false doctrine relative to the salvation of the soul, not false doctrine relative to spirit salvation, the salvation presently possessed by Christians.

Many of these false teachers are saved individuals who possess spirit salvation but speak against the Word of the kingdom. It is teachers of this nature that Peter warned against. Today, the message of the kingdom is seldom heard within the Church. The destructive work depicted by the leaven at the beginning of this dispensation in **Matthew 13:33** and the state of deterioration revealed in **Revelation 3:17** at the end of this dispensation, seen as: “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*” was and is carried out by false teachers under the influence of Satan and his seed. It is important to realize that for those who hear the Word of the kingdom and begin to produce fruit, their *greatest danger* would be to stray away from this truth which would stop their fruit production and result in their exclusion from the Kingdom in the age to come.

A false message concerning the Word of the kingdom today would come more likely from ignorance rather than from knowledge. Pastor-teachers in general have little to no understanding of the message surrounding the Word of the kingdom. Most pastors today are so involved with the busyness of their programs and the acceptance of their congregation that they seldom even open the Scriptures. Some order their sermons and teachings from religious organizations in which they are members, following it line by line. And because of this, they teach a contaminated form of Scripture. After this fashion, they do their damaging work of deceiving their flock, who in turn, never hear the truth concerning the kingdom message. And because the Word of the kingdom has never been mentioned, and is not recognizable, Christians (teachers and flock) tend to reject, despise and then ignore it when it is given to them. Instead, they continue to follow their destructive doctrines, as seen in **2 Peter 2:2-4**:

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...

What do you think will be the outcome of pastor-teachers today whose bad works against God derive from their false teachings? God did not spare the angels who sinned; neither will He spare false teachers. This is why Scripture warns Christians who desire to be pastor-teachers about false

teachings, as they will receive a stricter judgment. Much is expected of teachers who rule over their flock. They must be careful to teach the truth of the Word in all humility and they must be an example of godliness, being faithfully obedient to all the Scriptures.

Peter provides us with warnings in **2 Peter 2:18** as to what these deceptions look like. False teachers “*speak great swelling words of emptiness, and allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness...*” and “*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption.*”

Beware of pastor-teachers who speak big, intellectual words of promise that have no foundation in the Word of God. They promise freedom from sickness, pain, finances and worldly things, yet they themselves are in bondage, being corrupted in the things of the world. These messages they speak are doctrines of demons. We are not to be persuaded by these un-Biblical false messages, but we are to exercise discernment by and through the assimilation of God’s Word.

The false prophets of the past had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; through the knowledge of the kingdom. At first, they were speaking perverse things against “the faith.” Then, through the knowledge [Greek definition is “higher knowledge; *epignosis*”] concerning the Word of the kingdom, they had engaged in the race of the faith after a correct fashion. Yet, they fell away and turned against “the faith” and began spreading error, misleading numerous Christians. **2 Peter 2:20b** says that “*the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.*” They are referred to as this: “*A dog returns to his own vomit,*” and “*a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*” (**2 Peter 2:22**)

This warning is given to *all* Christians who have received the Word of the kingdom and then fall away; who revert back to false teachings and to the world. This warning is also given in **Hebrews 6:4** and **10:26**; and is a surety that those who fall away will receive no mercy at the Judgment seat of Christ, but a fiery indignation. These false teachers will get the same exact punishment as the fallen angels, angels who knew the holy commandments of God yet fell away and caused impending damage on

the earth. At their judgment, they will receive the worst, most horrific punishment ever to be dispensed.

The way in which we can exercise discernment from false teachers is to receive and mature in the knowledge of the Word of the kingdom. The way in which we can refrain from falling away is to keep our minds, our eyes, and our ears focused on the Word of God — *daily*. Peter reveals the sure path to the Kingdom — fruitful growth in the faith. God has given us all that we need in order to grow in the knowledge of Him (the Word of God) so that we can run the race of the faith until the end, produce fruit and overcome. This is what **2 Peter 1:2-4** is all about.

With this in mind, Peter gives the attributes needed in order to produce fruit for the Kingdom. This will guard us against the works of Satan, false teachers, and anyone who tries to turn us away from our inheritance. This fruitful growth is a segment of the attributes needed and when tied together with many other related Scriptures, will provide us with the tools necessary to run the race and win.

Fruitful Growth in the Faith

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:5-9)

In **2 Peter 1:5**, Peter begins with the first attribute:

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue...

The phrase “*add to your faith*” addresses the issue that “*faith without works is dead*” in **James 2:14**. This reassures us that faith and works go hand in hand in order to produce fruit for the kingdom. This message has

to do with things surrounding the salvation of the soul. First, we are to add to our faith the work of *virtue*. The Greek definition for the word *virtue* (Strong's #G703) means "moral excellency, praise, honor, valor, strength." We can translate this to mean someone with a high standard of excellent moral character; a character of goodness, honesty, righteousness, someone who chooses right from wrong.

An example can be seen in the "*virtuous wife*" in **Proverbs 31:10**. The virtuous wife is representative of the bride of Christ. Her acts of goodness, honesty and strength *all the days of her life* to her Husband and her household bring her praise and honor and qualifies her in the gates (of the kingdom). This type of individual will be hard to find at the end of this dispensation. God asked the question in **Proverbs 31:10**: *Who can find a virtuous wife?* A similar question is addressed in **Luke 18:8** when Christ said: "*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find [the] faith on the earth?*" The way in which these questions are worded in the Greek text necessitates a negative answer. Christ will *not* find "the faith" being taught in the Churches nor will He find a virtuous wife at the time of His return. One must possess the characteristic of "virtue" in order to produce fruit necessary to be qualified to enter the gates into the heavenly kingdom.

Second, we are to *add to your faith*, which means to "abundantly supply your faith" going **from virtue to knowledge**. The Greek translation for *gnosis* (Strong's #G1108) is "knowledge" meaning "to understand, to allow, perceive, be aware of by applying oneself in a great variety of applications." Knowledge of the Word comes from studying the Word. By dedicating ourselves to learning God's Word and allowing the Spirit to lead us into all truth, we may be able to go from "gnosis" to "*epignosis*" which means "super-knowledge." We must have the desire to eagerly seek the Scriptures so that we may know the truth and build upon the correct foundation. Throughout the New Testament there is much emphasis in acquiring knowledge of God's Word, specifically the Word of the kingdom. The main reason is that His Word leads to life. By knowing His Word, we know His plan and purpose for us. Our fruitful growth in the faith will come by the assimilation of God's Word, as **Romans 10:17** tells us:

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

In many of the opening Epistles, a prayer is introduced asking God to give the Church knowledge of Him through His word and through the power of the Holy Spirit. In **1 Corinthians 1:4-7**, we see the importance of the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ:

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

In **Colossians 1:9, 10**, Paul prays that the Church may be filled with the super-knowledge of Christ:

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

In **2 Peter 1:2, 3**, again a prayer for knowledge is given:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who call us by glory and virtue...

By acquiring the super-knowledge [*epignosis*] of the Word and then abiding in it, we are able to know Christ and the attributes necessary to gain life in the age to come.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts... (2 Peter 1:19)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Third, we are to abundantly supply self-control. This word means “temperance, self-restraint” and refers to the control of our conduct and our fleshly desires. Only by allowing the Holy Spirit to govern our lives can this be accomplished. Otherwise, our emotions and the indulgences of the flesh will control us. The old habitual conduct can be cast away when we continually replace it with our new godly conduct. The more we renew our minds by the Word and then allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of our old conduct, the easier it will be to put down the conduct of our flesh. With continual determination and adherence, we can be overcomers.

The fourth attribute following self-control is perseverance, which means “persistency, to be earnest towards, to be constantly diligent, to wait on continually” (Strong’s #G4343); and means the same as “patient endurance.” If we are to master self-control, we must have perseverance. Otherwise, a person will be easily discouraged and be tempted to quit. We must be persistent in our efforts to apply self-control by allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us. Whether trials or tribulations, suffering for Christ’s sake or suffering for doing good, we are to endure patiently until the end.

Next, we must abundantly supply godliness in our lives, which means “holiness, to be devoted to God, well-reverent” (Strong’s #G2150). This is the way in which we are to conduct ourselves throughout our life, even during trials. Christians represent the temple of God therefore they are to be holy.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17)

Then from godliness, we are to add in abundance, brotherly kindness.

The Greek translation *phileo* (Strong's #G5360; 5368) is brotherly kindness meaning "fraternal affection, love of the brethren (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of feeling)." This type of brotherly kindness is a love of keeping company with those who are of like-mind. It is the desire to be around our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to show our brotherly affection and kindness to them. Scripture exhorts Christians of like-mind to continue assembling together in order to encourage one another in the faith, to pray for one another and to assist one another when in need.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

When our life is centered on seeking the Kingdom first, we are no longer interested in spending time talking about worldly nonsense and fleshly desires. Our interests are now centered on gathering together with like-minded Christians to talk about Christ and His word. This fellowship brings about a bond of brotherly love [kindness] for one another.

A similar picture of what brotherly love and kindness looks like is in **Romans 12:10-13**:

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

And when considering "brotherly kindness" the question we must ask is: who are our brothers and sisters? Our answer is in **Matthew 12:47-50**:

Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"

For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

Those who exercise the will of the Father, who are like-minded in “the faith” are those who make-up our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The final attribute after brotherly kindness is to abundantly supply love. The Greek translation for *agape* is “love” (Strong’s #G25); and in the Hebrew (Strong’s #H5690) the translation is “much love, excessive love; a charitable, kind and affectionate act; beloved, dear.” It is an unconditional love not based solely on feelings, but on obedience, as seen in **John 14:15**, Christ saying, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*” *Agape* comes from God, for He is love.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love [agape]. (1 John 4:7, 8)

This is the greatest and most valuable attribute that a Christian can attain, because love is eternal. At the end of this age when we have been removed from this earth to the heavens, our faith and our hope will be finished. But love will remain forever. It is the greatest gift that God has bestowed upon His creation.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then

that which is in part will be done away.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love [agape]. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

In the following chapter, we will study about faith, hope and love. These three attributes points to a mature person, one who has the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and who is able to produce fruit for the kingdom. Knowing this, Peter exhorts us to press on and fight to acquire that higher calling to the kingdom:

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting [age-lasting; millennial] kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10, 11)

Peter closes his second Epistle with both a warning and an encouragement. After the Messianic Era, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. At this time, *all things* will be dissolved, including the earth and the heavens. Knowing that this world is passing away, ought we to be determined to mature and attain these attributes to be ready for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

These profound events will take place following the Millennium and should encourage us to be diligent to be found worthy, looking up unto

Jesus and the coming kingdom.

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:17, 18)

The Epistles & Gospel of John

John, a disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, centers both his Gospel and First Epistle on the foundation, Christ, and begins with a parallel to **Genesis** chapter **one**. The Gospel and the Epistles of **John** are quite unique in its arrangement from the other Gospels and Epistles. John's arrangement clearly addresses who God is and His purpose, in Christ, for His creation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-5, 14)

John's Gospel opens in a similar manner to the first four chapters of the Book of **Genesis**. And John begins in this manner for a particular reason — to reveal that it was God Himself, in the person of the Son, whom the Jewish people had crucified. **John 1:1** deals with the Deity of Christ. First, the Word, identified as both God and His Son, was with God in the beginning. Second, the Word who became flesh is seen as God Himself becoming flesh. And in many parts of the Gospel of John, Jesus equated Himself with God the Father.

“If you knew me, you would know my Father also” (John 14:7)

“Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9)

“Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (John 14:11)

“He who hates Me hates My Father as well.” (John 15:23)

“No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

“He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 9)

Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58)

“...as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us...” (John 17:21)

“I and My Father are one.” (John 10:30)

Jesus is God who came in the flesh (**1 Timothy 3:16**). He is completely human without sin and completely divine. From the beginning, God chose the seed of Adam by which Christ [the Seed of the woman] would come.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed...” (Genesis 3:15) [The word “seed” meaning descendants; Christ being the ultimate Seed]

From Jacob’s twelve sons, forming the twelve tribes of Israel, a nation was created by God through which He gave man the Redeemer, Christ. We see this realized in **Matthew 1:1**, listing the genealogy of Jesus Christ from Abraham, and then again in **Luke 3:23**, listing the genealogy of Jesus Christ from Adam, the son of God. And this particular seed was chosen so that God’s plans and purposes would be fulfilled.

Some within Christendom deny that Christ is a descendant of Adam – but what do the Scriptures say? If Christ is not a descendant of Adam, He cannot be the second Man, the last Adam, exercising federal headship in the place of the first man, the first Adam. He would then have to be seen as One from a different type creation (not as a man, not coming in the flesh) which the Scriptures clearly reveal doesn’t exist. Nor could He be the Savior if he were not a descendant of Adam. The Savior must be a

Man from Adam's lineage in order to redeem fallen man, which the Scriptures revealed numerous times throughout the Old Testament to Israel, revealing that the Savior would come from their descendants.

And exactly how this could all be possible --- Someone from Adam's lineage, being without sin and able to act in the capacity as Savior – is dealt with, from a medical standpoint, in the book, "The Chemistry of the Blood," written by M.R. DeHann. In **Leviticus 17:11**, Scripture reveals this:

For the life [soul] of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."

The animating principle of life or the soul is in the blood, that which houses our sin. Because of Adam's sin, his spiritually dead condition [his sin in the blood] was passed on to his progeny, all except Jesus Christ [because of the virgin birth]. In summary, DeHann pointed out that the blood to the fetus is not transmitted from the woman, *but from the man*. This would be the reason why Christ did not become contaminated with the blood of the virgin, and therefore not acquiring the sin that is linked to the blood. And this is how Jesus Christ was born of a woman, yet born without sin --- a virgin birth, born of the Holy Spirit. He was born of a woman without one drop of human blood in his veins, and thereby was able to avoid the sin of Adam which is only transmitted through the blood which the male contributes to his offspring. This is the reason for *the incarnation*; the reason for *the virgin birth*. God manifested in the flesh, incapable of sin, through the birth of a virgin, coming from Adam's lineage. God chose to come in this manner in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Seed of the woman, for one sole purpose --- redemption.

Other Scriptures identify that Christ was indeed a descendant of Adam, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of David (**2 Samuel 7:12-14; Ezekiel 37:24; John 7:40-42; Galatians 3:16-18; 29**). Christ was born of the woman (from Adam's lineage) *and* of the Holy Spirit. He was both man and God at the same time, without sin. Yet, as a descendant of David, Christ would be superior to him. In fact, He would be David's Lord and Savior. (**Mark 12:35**)

From the beginning, Jesus Christ was the Word of life:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us...and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:4)

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (John 8:12)

Jesus Christ is the Word, the Life and the Light. He gave light to this dark world. Just as the creation of light was the beginning of the restoration of the ruined creation (**Genesis 1:3**), so also believers upon receiving the Light become part of a new creation. Light then signifies Christ, life, goodness, brilliancy, and truth, whereas Dark signifies Satan, death, evil, darkness, deceitfulness and blindness. And because Israel was in a darkened and blinded state, Christ, as the Light, imparted light and truth to them by the use of “signs” during His ministry.

John, in his Gospel, records *eight signs*, specifically to the nation of Israel, the ones who required a sign (**Matthew: 12:39; John 4:48; 1 Corinthians 1:22**). The Holy Spirit singled out eight signs from among the numerous signs which Christ had performed, and moved the pen of John to record them in his Gospel, for a specific purpose — “*that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; and that believing you might have life through His name*” (**John 20:31b**).

These eight signs were performed and later recorded in order that those requiring a sign, Israel, might believe that Jesus is the Messiah. And these signs were performed during a time when the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to the nation. These signs had to do strictly with Israel and the kingdom [millennial life], not with eternal life. The recording of these signs in John’s gospel was directed to a people who were already eternally saved. An offer of the kingdom could *never* be extended to the unsaved.

The Jewish people believed in God, but the signs were given so that they would repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah and in the heavenly kingdom.

Signs, wonders and miracles were always in relation to *Israel and the kingdom*. The very first revelation of signs, wonders and miracles was performed by Moses and Aaron during Israel's deliverance from Egypt, with a view to the offer of the Promised Land. Then, Moses' successor, Joshua, continued to perform these signs with a view to Israel's entrance into the Promised Land.

The second revelation of signs, wonders and miracles in the Old Testament was through Elijah and his successor Elisha. These signs were performed about five hundred years after Moses, during the days in which Israel had already been established in the land. During this time, the Jewish people were to recognize that these signs had been sent by God and that they were to repent and follow Him as their sovereign Leader of their land, within a theocracy. However, the people of Israel failed to heed the message and the nation did not repent. God, therefore, allowed the surrounding nations, particularly Assyria and Babylon, to take Israel into captivity and scatter them amongst the Gentile nations.

This is when the "*times of the Gentiles*" began and it will last until the end of the Tribulation. This is a period of 2600 years during which Israel must dwell apart from a theocracy and remain scattered, allowing the Gentiles, among whom Israel dwells, to hold the scepter throughout this time. Many people today believe that Israel has already been restored as a nation and no longer remain scattered; however, this goes against God's Word. According to Scripture, Israel will not be restored to their land permanently as a nation until God restores them at the end of this age. Israel today is in the land temporarily because of their own will, not according to God's will. Their position will once again change when Antichrist drives them out of the land. Then, when Israel repents, God will hear their cries and restore them back to their land — forever.

Following 1500 years from the first manifestation of signs under Moses, Israel's Messiah appeared to them with a message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens; and this message was accompanied by numerous signs, wonders, and miracles (**Matthew 4:17-25**). Christ commissioned twelve disciples to help carry this message and they also were empowered

to perform signs, wonders and miracles (**Matthew 10:5-8**). Christ later “appointed” seventy others to go into every city and deliver the message, empowering them to perform signs, wonders, and miracles as well (**Luke 10:1-19**). Christ and the disciples had been sent only to “*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*” (**Matthew 10:6; 15:24**). Both Christ and His disciples went to Israel with the same message and the same revelation of supernatural powers. These supernatural powers depicted Israel’s present spiritual condition — *the head “sick” and the heart “faint”* (**Isaiah 1:5, 6**). This was the reason that most of the supernatural powers centered on bodily healings. Israel’s present sick condition could be healed if they would repent. The signs of healings *signified* that Israel could be restored.

The Jewish religious leaders were to see these miraculous healings and know that they were completely divine. Then, upon believing, they were to carry this message to the people of Israel. However, the religious leaders not only rejected the message, but also the Messenger, having crucified the Lord. This resulted in the offer of the heavenly kingdom removed from Israel and given to the “one new man” in Christ. But though the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of the offer of the heavenly kingdom, there was a re-offer of the heavenly kingdom to Israel after the inception of the Church (from 33 A.D. to about 63 A.D.). This is evident due to the continuance of signs, wonders and miracles given to Israel during this time. These signs had nothing to do with the “one new man” in Christ, but for Israel alone. It was not until after Israel’s rejection of the re-offer of the kingdom and their subsequent setting aside, did these signs, wonders and miracles cease to exist.

The first of the eight signs delivered to the nation of Israel was *The Wedding Festivities in Cana*.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty

gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it.

When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine...

You have kept the good wine until now! This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. (John 2:1-9, 10, 11)

This sign performed by Christ at the wedding festivities in Cana, as well as the rest of the signs, was performed in connection with the message that was first introduced by John the Baptist and then later by Christ, having to do with a call to Israel’s repentance, with a view to the heavenly kingdom.

“Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” (Matthew 3:1-3; 4:17)

The kingdom of the heavens was “at hand” at this time because the Messiah was present, extending an offer of the heavenly kingdom to the nation of Israel. Likewise, the first sign at the wedding in Cana was about events occurring during the wedding festivities, festivities *following* a marriage. This sign foretells the nation of Israel’s future restoration as the wife of God (**Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20**) and the wedding festivities which follow. Because of Israel’s past harlotry, God divorced Israel (**Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8**). Yet, after Christ returns and deals with Israel again, a remarriage will occur.

The wedding festivities began “*on the third day.*” This is symbolic of the Third Day (the third 1,000 year-period from Pentecost), and the Seventh Day from Adam, following Man’s Day — the Messianic Era. Through the judgments of the Tribulation, Israel will be brought to the place of repentance, allowing for the cleansing of the nation and subsequently, allowing for the wedding festivities, that which is pictured for us in the first sign of John’s gospel — the wedding festivities in Cana on the third day. Hosea prophesied about this very thing:

Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn but He will

heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days, He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. (Hosea 6:1, 2)

Although the signs, which points to the end times, were directed specifically to the nation of Israel, the Church during the end times will inevitably be affected as well. Since Israel rejected the offer of the heavenly kingdom, the Church became the recipient of this offer. Two separate wedding festivities will occur on the Third Day, the Seventh Day. One will occur in the heavenly kingdom [the kingdom of the heavens], having to do with Christ and His bride (**Revelation 19:7-9**); and the other will occur on earth, having to do with God and Israel (**John 2:1**). The wedding festivities seen in **Revelation 19:7-9** with Christ and His bride in heaven will begin immediately preceding Christ's return; and the wedding festivities in **John 2:1** will occur on earth with God and His wife, Israel, following Christ's return.

Christ's miraculous work of turning water into wine points to the restoration of Israel on the Third Day, forming a complete and perfect picture of events forthcoming. The symbolism of the "*six waterpots of stone*" points to the nation of Israel being restored. The number "six" is man's number and "stone" refers to the present condition of Israel's heart before their restoration. Water being "*filled to the brim*" shows the completeness of the work, signifying cleansing. The master of the feast referred to the wine which Christ had changed from water as "*the good wine,*" kept "*until now.*" This was a reference to the wine being *the best wine at the wedding festivities, kept until last.*

The prophet Ezekiel had prophesied about this very thing 2500 years earlier:

"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you

shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

The wine which Christ made at the wedding festivities in Cana was a special type of wine which had never been produced. It was the best wine the master had ever tasted. Note at Christ’s first coming while partaking of the last supper, the Passover meal, with His disciples, Christ took His cup containing wine and gave thanks, and then gave it to His disciples, saying,

“Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” (Matthew 26:27b-29).

Christ, along with His disciples, will again drink of the fruit of the vine together. But this time it will be in the Father’s kingdom — at the marriage festivities of the Lamb, seen in **Revelation 19:7-9**. Yet, the picture presented with Christ and His disciples at the wedding festivities in Cana was a picture of *Israel’s* wedding festival yet future. Exactly as Christ and His disciples had been called to a wedding festival in Cana on the third day, the seventh day, they will be called to a wedding festival on the Third day, the Seventh Day yet future. During the Millennium, the twelve disciples will sit on twelve thrones, judging (ruling and reigning over) the twelve tribes of Israel (**Matthew 19:28**) from Christ’s heavenly throne, along with the rest of the bride (**Revelation 3:21**). And Israel, as God’s restored wife, will be at the head of the nations, ruling with Christ from David’s throne on earth.

The second sign in John’s Gospel directed to Israel (with a view to the kingdom) is *A Nobleman’s Son Healed*.

So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders,

you will by no means believe.” The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!” Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” (John 4:46-50)

To properly understand the setting for this second sign, the time and events preceding this sign must be viewed. The sequence of events has to do with a *two-day period* in Judaea and a *two-day period* in Samaria before that which had occurred. For two days, Christ had spent time with the Jewish people in Judaea.

Then, coming out of Judaea, Christ spent two days in Samaria (Samaritans were made up of both Jews and Gentiles who were despised by most of the Jewish people). And following *this* two-day period, Christ left Samaria and went into Galilee, returning to the place where He had performed His first sign, returning to Cana in Galilee, where He was received by the Jewish people, where He healed the nobleman’s son, and where belief was expressed because of the son being healed.

The time and events depicted by the two-day period spent with the Jewish people in Judaea symbolizes God’s dealings with the nation of Israel from Abraham to Pentecost (near 2,000-year period). Then, the time and events depicted by the two-day period spent with the Samaritans foretells God’s dealings with the Gentiles during the present dispensation, which is a two-day period, a 2,000-year period from Pentecost to Christ’s second coming. And it was after two days (on the third day) that Christ healed the nobleman’s son.

The last two-day period points to 2,000 years of Christ’s dealings with the Church (the Gentiles). After 2,000 years, Christ will return to the exact place where He performed signs — to the land of Israel. And this time, He will be received by the Jewish people and He will provide healing for them, as pictured in **Hosea 5:13-6:2** and **Jeremiah 33:6-9**. This time the Jewish people will believe in the One who provided healing (**Ezekiel 37:11-14**). Divine healing for God’s son, Israel, is typified by divine healing for the nobleman’s son.

It is evident from Christ’s words to the nobleman in **John 4:48** that the man was a Jew, not a Gentile. Christ told the nobleman, “*Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.*” The Jewish people required a sign, not the Gentiles. Therefore, the matter surrounding

the healing of the nobleman's son has to do with the Jewish people. It was a sign pointing to their future healing and it was performed so that they would believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God*, with a view to the kingdom of the heavens.

The third sign recorded in John's gospel is *A Certain Man Healed at Bethesda* in **John 5:1-15**. "*Bethesda*" was the name of the pool near the Sheep Gate, a gate in the wall of Jerusalem near the temple, through which sheep were brought for sacrifice. *Bethesda* is a Hebrew name meaning "house of mercy." At this pool, *a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed waited for the moving of the water* — for an angel came down each day and stirred up the water, then whoever stepped in first was made well. Evidently, angels were sent during Christ's earthly ministry for a particular purpose — pertaining to Israel's future healing.

This third sign pertains to the same exact thing as the previous sign — Israel's present sick condition. However each sign provides further commentary regarding the time and events of Israel's present sick condition and Israel's future restoration.

The preceding sign, the healing of the nobleman's son in Cana of Galilee, is a picture of God's dealings with Israel during the present dispensation, the last of three distinct dispensations; each dispensation lasting two days (2,000 years each, totaling 6,000 years of Man's Day) and healing performed on the third day, the seventh day (the third 1,000-year period, the seventh 1,000-year period).

This third sign, the healing of the man who had an illness for thirty-eight years, on the Sabbath day, provides further commentary on the matter relating to the time and events of the sickness and restoration of Israel. Both signs deal with the exact same thing, with Israel's present sick condition and future healing.

The "sick, blind, lame and paralyzed people" in need of healing depicts the Jewish people in a non-functional state of being, relative to that which God had called them to do — to be God's witnesses to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth. The Jewish people are seen lying around unable to do anything other than be in need of healing at the "house of mercy." While lying there, the Jewish people are depicted as being blind — *spiritually blind* (**Isaiah 1:4-6; 29:9-16; Lamentations 4:14**). The Jewish people,

scattered throughout the whole world, are sick (blind) because of past unbelief and disobedience, whereby there has been no repentance. There has been no change in Israel's condition throughout the centuries and there will be no change until the Lord brings them, through judgment, to a place of repentance. Until Israel repents, God will not heal the nation (**Leviticus 26:40**).

The "certain man" who Christ chose to heal had been sick for *thirty-eight years*. "Thirty-eight years" relates back to the time when the Israelites arrived at Kadesh-Barnea under Moses. It had been two years following the Exodus from Egypt when they arrived and not until *thirty-eight years* later were they ready to enter the land under Joshua. This totaled 40 years, which is a *complete* period of time in Scripture, a time in which Israel was wandering in the desert until they experienced healing from the Lord. And the man at the pool of Bethesda who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed by the Lord on the *Sabbath* day. The Lord had used the very day (the Sabbath) when healing would occur for the nation to show the Jewish people what they could possess. After the man was healed by the pool on the Sabbath day he then believed upon the Lord who *told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well* (**John 4:15**).

The previous sign signifies Israel's restoration on the 3rd Day, the 7th Day. This third sign signifies the Day of the Sabbath, the Sabbath Rest. But the Jews, at the time when this sign was performed, totally ignored the miraculous work of the Lord, and instead, sought to kill Christ because "He had done these things on the Sabbath day." They ignored the true meaning behind that which the Sabbath pointed, which is the coming Seventh Day, the Millennial Kingdom, when healing will occur for the nation of Israel. The Sabbath itself was originally given to Israel as a *sign* (a "sign" in Scripture points to something else) [**Exodus 31:16, 17**], to keep the focus ever before the nation, that following six days of work (seen in the opening two chapters of **Genesis**; cf **Exodus 20:11**), there would come a seventh day of rest, a day that will be *all Sabbath*.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying:

'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. (Exodus 31:12, 13)

The fourth sign in John's gospel surrounding God's dealings with Israel with respect to the kingdom of the heavens is **The Feeding of Five Thousand**.

Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:2-6, 10, 11, 14)

The fourth sign points to events that will occur with the nation of Israel *following* their restoration when they receive the earthly portion of the Millennial kingdom. Once the Jewish people have been restored to their land, and the land itself has been restored, then the Lord will provide for the nation in the land. This is what the fourth sign is about.

The fourth sign begins with Christ taking His disciples up on the mountain at the near time of the Passover feast. A "mountain" in Scripture signifies a *kingdom* (**Daniel 2:35d; Matthew 17:1; Revelation 17:9b; 21:10**). Christ taking his disciples up on the mountain first was His way of establishing the setting for this fourth sign — bringing the focus of the kingdom first, so that they would understand the meaning behind this sign. Another key point is the timing in which Christ performs this sign — at the nearness of the Passover.

The Passover had to do with death and shed blood of the firstborn, either

by way of a substitute or apart from a substitute. And the proper application of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts in which the firstborn lived showed that the firstborn had already died, via a substitute. Now “Christ” is the Passover Lamb, and Israel had slain this Lamb. And, since Christ’s death at Calvary, Israel (God’s firstborn son) has yet to apply the blood. The Passover points to that future Day when Christ returns. Upon seeing Christ, the nation will realize what they have done and they will believe in Christ, thereby appropriating the blood at that time. Therefore, the Passover foretells Israel’s national conversion at the time of Christ’s return. Only after the Passover has been fulfilled can the events which the fourth sign points to occur.

The fourth sign was Christ’s miraculous work of reproducing food from only five loaves of bread and two small fish to feed about five thousand people. And the reproduction of this small amount of food not only fed about five thousand people but carried over twelve baskets of food that remained after the fragments had been collected.

There were two key points presented in this fourth sign, both having to do with what God will provide to Israel in the future Millennial kingdom. First, God will provide the bread:

Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:26, 27)

After hearing this, the people drew their attention to the Manna during Moses’ day. But Christ remained on the subject of the sign, referring to His Bread, the Bread of Life that He will give them on that future Day:

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has

eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

For My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

This is the bread which came down from heaven — not as your father ate the Manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:53-58)

The reproduction of the loaves of bread and the fish signifies the partaking of Christ Himself, for He is “*The Word made flesh, and dwelt among us...*” (**John 1:14a**). The bread and fish pointed to the eating of the Bread of Life — eating His flesh, drinking His blood. The written Word is alive and powerful (**Hebrews 4:12**) and became flesh, in the Person of His Son, the living Word. Therefore, when one partakes of the written Word, he is partaking of the Bread of Life, symbolically of Christ’s flesh and blood. And Christians must partake of Christ in the same manner — by partaking of the written Word — if they are to have a part with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

The nation of Israel to whom the sign points was given the written Word, and through them Christ came, who is the living Word. In the Millennial kingdom, the nation of Israel will possess the written Word in their hearts and minds; and will finally be able to produce the fruit for which they were originally called to do — as God’s witnesses to the Gentiles; *and* they will possess the living Word — as Christ, the Rod of Jesse, will dwell in their midst.

Second, the twelve tribes of Israel (signified by the twelve remaining baskets of food) will be placed at the head of the nations, in a position through whom all the blessings will flow out to the Gentile nations and Christ will be in the midst of them.

In that day sing to her (Israel), A vineyard of red wine! I, the Lord, keep it, I water it every moment, Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day. (Isaiah 27:2, 3)

Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall

blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Isaiah 27:6)

In that day the Lord of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people,

For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. (Isaiah 28:5, 6)

The fifth sign given to the nation of Israel surrounding the kingdom is **Deliverance from the Sea.**

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Now when evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.

So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. (John 6:15-21)

The sequence of events leading up to the fifth sign reveal how God would deal with the nation of Israel from Pentecost to the end of the Tribulation, a 2,000 year period. This sign begins with Christ departing to the mountain; a "mountain" signifying a *kingdom*. While Christ was on the mountain alone, the disciples went into a boat out to sea. These events point to Christ's departure from Israel to the heavens. *And it was dark, and Jesus had not come to them* reveals Israel's separation from the Lord, set aside as a nation, scattered amongst the Gentiles and perceived as being "dark," symbolizing "a place of death" but also "blindness" while out among the Gentile nations ("*out to sea,*" the word "sea" referring to "Gentile nations" and to "the place of death").

In keeping with the sign having to do with Israel and the kingdom, we can

then understand this dark place, a place of death, relating to *the time of Jacob's trouble*, because of Israel's blindness and disobedience; referring to the end times, the Tribulation. *Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing* symbolizes the second segment of this dark time (the last three and a half years remaining of Man's Day), which is *the Great Tribulation*. The "sea" or "Gentile nations" arose because of God's judgment (*a Great Wind*) upon the nation of Israel. The Great Tribulation will be a period of climactic distress, surpassing any other — "*such as never before.*" God will allow the Gentile nations under Antichrist to bring about such horrific conditions, in order to bring the Jewish people to the place of repentance.

"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh will be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (**Matthew 24:22**)

But for the elect's sake, we find that the disciples in the boat were in a place of safety, just as Noah and his family in the ark were in a place of safety during the storm. During the Tribulation, following Satan's expulsion from heaven to earth, the remnant (144,000 Jews) will be *nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent* (**Revelation 12:14d**). God will provide a safe haven for them during the Great Tribulation.

Then, deliverance in this fifth sign occurred when the disciples were alone in the boat during the sea storm and *they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat*. This foretells of the time at the end of the Tribulation, after Israel has cried out to the Lord for deliverance, when Christ will appear the second time to save the people and restore them to their land.

The disciples seeing Jesus "*were afraid.*" When Christ returns to earth at the end of the Tribulation, every eye will see Him and every soul will "be afraid." His majestic power and glory will light up the entire dark world. He will come as the "*Lion of the tribe of Judah.*"

But to the disciples, to His elect, He says, "*It is I; do not be afraid.*" Those who know Him, through His Word, will recognize Him on that Day; and like the disciples, will willingly receive Him. God will guard and reward His elect.

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” (Genesis 15:1)

This fifth sign foretells the events that will occur during the seven year Tribulation, exactly as it happened in this sign. This sign presents one of many aspects of the same thing surrounding the end times. Exactly the same word-picture is presented throughout both Testaments in order to give us a complete picture of God’s plans and purposes. God has revealed over and over throughout His Word, using different authors, times, places people and events, His plans and purposes so that we, in turn, can realize what will shortly take place. And all that is seen occurring in the sign after the disciples had received Jesus will be with a view to Israel realizing their calling — the land, the inheritance, the Millennial kingdom.

...and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. (John 6:21)

In that Day, the nation of Israel as a whole, will realize their calling as God’s witnesses to the Gentile nations, to the ends of the earth (**Isaiah 43:9**). And, as God had originally covenanted to Abraham, “*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (**Genesis 12:3**), Israel in that Day will rule over and bless the Gentile nations with Christ in their midst. The days will no longer be dark, but bright, secure, and joyful.

The sixth sign in John’s gospel is **A Blind Man Healed**.

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of

Siloam” (Siloam is translated “Sent”). *So he went and washed, and came back seeing.*

Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?” Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.” He said, “I am he.” Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.” Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. (John 9:1-11, 14)

The sixth sign begins with the disciples asking Jesus “*who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*” It was commonly supposed that sickness was a result of sin. It would follow that sins committed by a baby still in the womb or sins committed by parents could result in a baby being born with a disease. Jesus rejected both suggestions. Jesus told them that neither had sinned, *but that the works of God should be revealed in him.* God allowed the man to be born blind so that Christ could heal him and thus reveal the works of God. But Jesus was referring to the nation of Israel and chose this man as an example to exhibit Israel’s condition. Just as the man was born blind, so it was with Israel. Israel has been blind since birth, since they were created by God in Jacob. Since their birth, Israel has never produced fruit for the Lord, in respect to their calling — to be God’s witnesses to the Gentiles (**Isaiah 43:10**). And Israel will remain in this blind condition and in a state of unbelief, remaining in the place of death until Christ returns, who will then give them life and sight. Then and only then will Israel realize their calling and go forth in fulfillment of **Isaiah 43:10**, as God’s witnesses:

“You are My witnesses,” says the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.”

Jesus’ next statement centers around the present condition of Israel, saying:

“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the

night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:4, 5)

God sent Jesus to the earth to minister to the Jews up until His departure to the heavens. After Israel’s rejection of Jesus, God had temporarily suspended His national dealings with Israel and is now dealing exclusively with the new creation in Christ — for two thousand years. Following two thousand years, Christ will give life and sight to the nation of Israel.

Jesus then gives sight to the blind man. After Jesus had placed the clay on the blind man’s eyes, He told him *to go wash with water* in the pool of Siloam, which means “Sent.” After he washed his eyes with water in this pool, he was then able to receive sight for the first time, relative to his calling — meaning “*Sent to others as God’s witness*.” As a result, the man would go forth believing in Christ and witnessing to others concerning Jesus the Christ (**John 9:11, 27, 30-33, 38**).

“Water” is often used in Scripture to refer to the Word of God, as seen in **Ephesians 5:26**:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...

And this is the way “water” appears to be used in this fifth sign as well. The eyes of the person born blind were opened by the *living* Word, Who is the written Word. And the healing of the man born blind occurred on the Sabbath day, that which points to the Seventh Day, the Millennial Kingdom. Many of the signs that Jesus performed were done on the Sabbath for this very reason. But many of the arrogant and wicked Jewish religious leaders brought accusations against Christ for supposedly “violating the Sabbath.” But these religious leaders were strictly going by the *letter* of Scripture, not knowing the *Spirit* of Scripture, thereby not understanding Scripture altogether, especially with regards to what the Sabbath actually meant and what it pointed to. Had they known the Scriptures, they would have recognized their Messiah and would have understood the signs and why they were being performed on the Sabbath. Instead of accusing Christ of violating the Sabbath, they would have seen and understood that the healing of a sick or blind man on the Sabbath pointed to the healing of Israel on the Sabbath, the Seventh 1000-year

period. But because their hearts were hardened, they went against everything that Christ and His disciples taught. Matters had become so bad that these Jews, the religious leaders, *had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue (John 9:22)*. This is again seen in **John 12:42, 43**:

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

When Christ returns, these religious leaders will see Him once again and will mourn. It will be a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31)*.

The seventh sign in John's gospel is **The Raising of Lazarus**.

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judaea again."

So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell

down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

Now when He said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth, Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." (John 11:1-7, 17, 23-26, 32-39, 41-44)

This seventh sign has to do with Israel's sick [blind] condition, a condition that has gone unchanged for the past 4,000 years. The death of Lazarus symbolizes the nation of Israel as having been in the place of death for four days, pointing to the condition of the Jewish people throughout their 4,000-year history, a condition of their unfruitful state concerning the message which they were to carry and proclaim to the Gentiles.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, *He stayed two more days in the place where He was (John 11:6)*. During the first two days, Jesus heard about Lazarus sickness ("Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick" **John 11:3**), pointing to the first 2,000 years from Israel's birth. Israel has been sick [blind] during the two days from Abraham/Jacob to Jesus. Following this, Jesus waited *two more days*, another 2,000 year-period, which would fall within this present 2,000-year dispensation (*The present dispensation covers the time from Pentecost until Christ's second coming*). During the present dispensation, God has temporarily set aside His dealings with the

nation of Israel. This present dispensation has to do with God's dealings with the Church, in which He has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son. At the end of this dispensation, when the bride has been acquired, she will be removed to the heavens and then God will complete His dealings with Israel. When Israel repents, God will raise them up from the dead and then they will believe in Christ and realize their calling. This is when the Messianic Era will be ushered in and Israel will be God's witnesses on earth to the Gentiles. This is the meaning of the seventh sign concerning Lazarus' death and resurrection. When Christ said, "*Let us go to Judaea again,*" matters moved from the present to a future time, to a time when Christ will return back to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation.

When Jesus arrived in Judaea, the remarks from the Jewish people to Jesus, including Martha and Mary (sisters of Lazarus), indicate that they were still in a state of blindness and unbelief. This depicts Israel's blindness and unbelief until Christ returns.

When Martha realized Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet Him, but Mary remained *sitting in the house*. And the first thing addressed to Christ by both of them, which represented a lack of faith, was "*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died*" (1 **John 11:21, 32b**). In **John 11:23**, Jesus assured her that her brother would rise. And, rather than Martha showing her faith in Christ as the One with the power of resurrection, she says, "*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*" So again Jesus corrected her by saying, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live*" (**John 11:25, 26**).

At the end of two days [2,000 years], Christ will return to raise Israel from the dead. The complete scope of resurrection will be comprised of the nation as a whole being gathered from the four corners of the earth and being raised from the dead to be judged in the wilderness (**Ezekiel 20:34, 35**) and then restored to their land. And just as Lazarus was raised in "a natural body" of flesh, blood, and bones, so will the whole house of Israel be raised in the same manner. We see this in **Ezekiel 37**:

Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and

you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:4-6)

Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’” Therefore prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord... (Ezekiel 37:11-13)

After Christ saw Mary weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, “Where have you laid him?” Even after Christ had spoken to them concerning “I am the resurrection and the life,” their continual weeping showed their unfaithfulness to Him. This caused Jesus to groan in the spirit and be troubled. The Greek definition for the word *groan* [Strong’s # G1690] is “to snort with anger; to have indignation; to sigh with chagrin;” and the word *troubled* [Strong’s # G5015] is “to stir or agitate.” And this will be the exact same condition that Christ will find His people when He returns at the end of this dispensation — blind and unfaithful to His Word.

As another test of their faith, Christ asked them where they had laid Lazarus. Of course, Christ knew where Lazarus had been laid — and He didn’t need to be present to raise him either. They should have responded in the same manner as the centurion soldier who asked Christ to heal his sick servant:

“Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.”

When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:8-12)

The centurion soldier believed in Christ and therefore knew that He did not need to be present to heal his servant, but by His Word alone the servant would be healed. This was yet another of Christ's many signs and miracles that He performed during His ministry to Israel.

But rather than acting by faith, the Jews in this seventh sign told Jesus, "*Lord, come and see.*" Their unbelief in Him caused Him to weep for them, probably because He pictured them at their future judgment. But many of the Jews that were there did not understand His sorrow, saying, "*See how He loved him!*" And some of them said, "*Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?*" In hearing this, Jesus again groaned in Himself because of their unbelief.

When Jesus came up to the tomb, He commanded the Jews to "*Take away the stone.*" This pointed to Israel's deliverance, when Christ, at the end of the Tribulation, will restore the nation of Israel and *will take away their hearts of stone (Ezekiel 36:24)*. Yet again, Martha the sister of Lazarus responded in unbelief and said to Christ, "*Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.*" So Jesus said to her, probably in an agitated voice, "*Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?*"

Following this, Christ lifted up His eyes and prayed to the Father:

"Father, I thank you that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." (**John 11:41, 42**)

The seventh sign, like all the other signs, were performed because of Israel's unbelief, so that they may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and that the Father sent Him.

Christ had performed *numerous* signs for Israel up until this point; this sign being the last one He would perform *before His death*, but not the last one. The last sign, the eighth sign, was Christ's resurrection *after His death*.

Once Israel is resurrected, judged, and restored to their land on that future Day, they will finally place their belief in Christ and will "*come forth*" to

live in His sight.

I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.”

Come, and let us return to the Lord, For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord, His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth (Hosea 5:15-6:3)

Christ, who is the “Resurrection and the Life,” will be present at the time when Israel and the Church are raised, just as He was present at the time when Lazarus was raised. With Israel and the Church, Christ will “go forth” to save His people and His people will “come forth” at His command. And just as Lazarus (a type of Israel) came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth, so it will be with Israel. This pointed to Israel’s physical and spiritual appearance in the place of death, literally bound hand and foot, but also their spiritual state of bondage and their face covered because of their blindness. But once they are raised, like Lazarus, Christ will command, “Loose him, and let him go.” Israel will be free from their place of death, from their bondage and their spiritual blindness — Israel (as a whole) will finally see, believe and live in His sight. And Israel, in that coming Day, will carry God’s message to the Gentiles, will be a blessing to them, and God will bless Israel forever.

The last sign, the eighth sign, in John’s gospel is **The Resurrection of Christ.**

Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not go in.

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then, the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. (John 20:1-10)

In **John 2:18-21**, Jesus had made mention of his resurrection being a *sign* during the Passover in Jerusalem:

So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy the temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when he had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Then, in **Matthew 12:38-40**, Jesus uses a different approach as to his resurrection being a *sign* when confronted by the Jewish religious leaders:

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Just as Jonah was cast into the sea (*sea* referring to “Gentiles” and “the

place of death”), died in the sea, and was raised from the dead on the third day, so would the Son of Man be delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles, suffer death, and be raised from the dead on the third day. The occurrence of Jonah, a *type* of Christ, forms a *sign* for the Jewish people. Therefore, based upon this, it is evident that the resurrection of Christ forms a *sign* for the Jewish people as well.

And this eighth sign was Christ’s last sign in John’s gospel to effect belief among the Jewish people during the years of the reoffer of the heavenly kingdom (from 33 A.D. to about 63 A.D.).

Following Christ’s resurrection, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early while it was still dark, found the stone rolled away from the tomb, and Christ’s body no longer present in the tomb. In light of the time of Mary’s arrival to the tomb, Christ must have risen sometime prior to the first day of the week, and it seems more likely that it would have been at the end of the Sabbath day. This also seems more likely when a comparison is drawn from the other signs that were performed by Christ during His ministry — they also were performed on the Sabbath day. Furthermore, we have numerous examples and comparisons in Scripture relating the Sabbath day as the Seventh day of Rest, the Day of the Lord — pointing to the Millennial Kingdom. And the sign of Christ’s resurrection also pointed to the Seventh day of Rest, the Millennial Kingdom. This is what the *sign* was all about.

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
(Genesis 2:1-3)

God blessed the seventh day as a day of rest from all of His work. And, just as the restorative works of all the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present condition was fixed to six thousand years. By the same analogy, this long period of restoration would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years, in which Christ along with His saints would reign over and upon the earth. And it is therefore of

great importance to see why God sanctified the seventh day, as the *day of Rest* --- a history of the past --- and a prophecy of the future.

And this is the very same pattern that God used in setting required times and feasts to be celebrated and remembered by the Jewish people, not as a legalistic fleshly practice without purpose, but as a *sign*, a sign pointing to the Seventh Day, to keep it ever in their minds:

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:3) See also **Ezekiel 20:12**

God's promise to Israel for the inheritance of Canaan, the promised land, was a promise of *rest* to all those who were faithfully obedient to Him.

So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.

Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. (Joshua 21:43-45)

The Promised Land, the land of Canaan, is a *type* of the future kingdom on earth for the nation of Israel and is also a *type* of the future kingdom of heaven for the bride (overcoming Christians), given as an example for all Christians to realize. Entering and conquering the land enabled Israel to experience God's rest, which He had covenanted to the Israelites through Jacob. The author of **Hebrews** equates this Old Testament concept of *rest* with entering into Christ's rest, that is, His future Millennial kingdom.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them (Israel); but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,”

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works,’ and again in this place: ‘They shall not enter My rest.’

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day... (Hebrews 4:1-7)

The Sabbath Day, the *Day of Rest*, points to the Seventh Day, the seventh one thousand year period of the Messianic Era. And just as God had finished His restorative works of the material creation on the seventh day, the Sabbath day, so also Christ finished His works at Calvary, when He said in **John 19:30**, *“It is finished!”* following with His resurrection on the seventh day, the Sabbath day.

We find further commentary in **Matthew 28:2** concerning the stone that had been rolled away from Jesus’ tomb. An angel of the Lord had descended from heaven and rolled back the stone, but not to let Christ out of the tomb, as in the case with Lazarus in the previous sign. Rather, the angel had rolled the stone back to let others in to see that Christ was already out. This angel was sent as a ministering spirit to let Mary know what had happened, that *He is risen, as He said* and then commanded her to *Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples.*

Peter and John ran fast to the tomb as soon as Mary told them that Christ was no longer there. Peter went into the tomb to carefully examine the place where Jesus’ body had laid. *And he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself (John 20:6, 7).* The Greek term for the word “saw” implies an intense stare, in contrast to the more casual look described in verse **five**.

Peter stared intensely at the empty grave clothes as they laid in an undisturbed manner, in other words, they had not been handled or unwrapped — the cloth was intact. Christ, at the time and following His resurrection, possessed a body capable of movement from one point to

another at will, a body animated by the Spirit. He could appear in the midst of His disciples and then disappear at will (**Luke 24:15, 31, 36; John 20:26**). So, at the instant Christ rose from the dead, He did not remove his grave clothes or walk out of the tomb. Rather, He simply vanished from one point and reappeared in another, from the tomb to another location outside the tomb. A reference to this type of removal can be seen in **1 Corinthians 15:52** with the resurrection and rapture of the Church. It will be “*in the twinkling of an eye.*” Therefore, with Jesus’ body no longer inside the grave clothes, the linen wrappings remained lying there maintaining the shape of the body, and the napkin which had been over His face fell in folds where His head had been laid. This account was what Peter and John stared at intensely and what resulted in John’s *immediate* belief. And because he witnessed this sign and spent forty days afterwards with the resurrected Christ, Peter spent five years in the proclamation of the message of Christ’s resurrection to the Church (**Acts 2:14-39**).

Ten days after Christ’s ascension, on the day of Pentecost, there were about one hundred and twenty disciples, including the apostles, that gathered together to proclaim “*the wonderful works of God*” to those present in Jerusalem, including those who came from afar that spoke in different languages. And after the disciples had been filled with the Spirit, through the supernatural resources of the Spirit, they proclaimed the message of Christ speaking foreign dialects to the people who had gathered from other nations. Peter stood up and spoke in a bold manner, centering his speech on Christ’s resurrection and all which the resurrection now made possible.

This type belief was not seen during the time the disciples spent three and one-half years with Christ prior to His death. Rather, at the end of this period, “*all the disciples forsook Christ, and fled*” (**Matthew 26:56**). But this time, after spending forty days with the resurrected Christ, the matter was entirely different. The matter that made such a big difference in their faith now was the fact that their message centered on something not applicable before — *the fact that Christ had risen from the dead*.

And though this eighth sign in John’s gospel was to effect *belief* among the nation of Israel during the reoffer of the kingdom, this did not happen. However, Israel *will* believe in that future Day when Christ, the pierced One in all His glory, returns to the nation. Then, Israel will go forth with a

message concerning the resurrected Christ, a message that will be given to the Gentiles to the ends of the earth.

Born Again in the Spirit

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
(John 3:3)

The Gospel of **John** introduces the act of being “*born again*,” meaning “brought forth from above” or “brought forth from God.” Nicodemus, a teacher among the Pharisees in Israel, came to Jesus acknowledging that no one could perform the *signs* being revealed apart from God’s power. Jesus’ response to Nicodemus, in light of the *signs* being performed and the message being proclaimed, was centered on the necessity of divine healing for Israel, which could only come “from above,” from “God’s power.” In other words, not only were *the signs* “brought forth from above” (reflecting upon Israel’s sick condition) but the *healing* for Israel must also be “brought forth from above,” or “brought forth from God.” Thus, the matter in John’s gospel pertaining to being “born again” or “brought forth from above” had to do with the *Jewish people*, along with the *signs* and the *future heavenly kingdom*.

And contrary to what most Churches teach concerning this subject, eternal salvation is not applicable here. The subject at hand deals with the same matter as it has always been dealt with in the past — with Israel (a people who could only be viewed as *already saved*) and an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom [millennial salvation]. This message of being “born again” was not something new, but was a requirement for Israel previously seen in the Old Testament.

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”
(John 3:5)

In **John 3:5**, Jesus referred back to the *type*, having to do with events beyond the Passover in **Exodus 12**, with a continued bringing forth from above, and a goal in view — an inheritance to the kingdom. Born out of water then can only pertain to the Red Sea passage following the Passover.

The Israelites (who had experienced the death of the firstborn through the application of the blood on the doorposts in Egypt) were then taken down into the Sea, symbolizing burial after death and raised up out of the Sea, symbolizing resurrection and placed on the eastern banks of the Sea (**Exodus 12-15**). They did this through God's power, "brought forth from God," and with a view to an inheritance in another land.

The Israelites, following the *death of the firstborn* which showed their belief in the Lord, possessed Spiritual life. Thus, they had to be raised from the place of death in order to walk in "newness of life" — having to do with walking in the Spirit and no longer in the flesh. This is pictured during the present dispensation through *the act of baptism*.

The Christian having experienced the death of the firstborn vicariously (through belief in Christ, the blood of the Paschal Lamb Who died in his stead), is placed down in the waters. This symbolizes the Christian in the place of death (death of the flesh), buried beneath the waters. Then the Christian can be removed from the waters and find himself in the position of having been raised with Christ, now being in a position to walk in "newness of life," with a view to an inheritance in another land, the heavenly land. And because this act is a "work," a Christian's proclamation of faithful obedience to walk in the Spirit with the goal of reaching the heavenly kingdom, it cannot pertain to spirit-salvation [eternal life] but to soul-salvation [millennial life].

In **John 3:5**, Jesus not only referred to being born of water, but also of being born of the Spirit. In the Old Testament, this is pictured for us through the Israelites, after being raised out of the Sea were being led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, as they journeyed toward an inheritance in another land. Likewise, a Christian, who is raised from the water to walk "in newness of life," has the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead him into all truth, as he journeys toward an inheritance in the heavenly land.

And the entire matter rests on its beginning foundation in **Genesis 1:2b-25**, in which the ruined creation was raised up out of the waters and completely restored over six days' time by means of a work of the Spirit. This is why both water and Spirit are parallel with one another and why much importance is given to the matter, for only through this dual means can a Christian enter into the kingdom of God.

This process of putting to death the flesh and walking according to the Spirit is a daily requirement of faithful obedience — and, if followed, represents individuals who are “born of God” and is the central message of **1 John’s** Epistle. The structure of **1 John’s** Epistle runs parallel with parts of John’s Gospel. An individual who is not for Christ is viewed to be against Christ and there is no middle ground. And, an individual either walks in the Spirit and experiences fellowship with the Father and His Son or he walks in darkness and does not experience this fellowship.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. (1 John 3:7, 8)

The reference, “little children,” can only be directed to individuals who are experiencing child-training as *sons of God*. And this training will allow individuals to be among those in that future Day to be adopted as *firstborn sons of God*, allowing them to occupy kingship positions in the kingdom (for only “sons” can rule).

John uses the expression “brought forth out of God,” or “born of God” *ten* times in his first Epistle. This expression is stressed to make one point quite clear — that one who is “born of God” must put on the practical attributes of God — He must practice walking in the light in order to be seen in connection or belonging to God. And though these individuals are *eternally saved*, if they do not walk in the light as “God is light,” then they will have no part with Him in the coming Millennial kingdom. And the test of knowing and having fellowship with Him is how one knows Him *through His Word*:

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. (1 John 2:5)

John’s first use of the expression “brought forth out of God’ or “born of God,” is seen in **1 John 2:29**:

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

This *righteousness* being practiced by those who are child-training as

“sons” can come only from above [brought forth from above, out of God]. Righteousness emanates from God. And if we practice righteousness, we are being trained by God and therefore we are “born of God.”

The second reference “born of God” is seen in **1 John 3:9**, where it is used twice.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:7-9)

Then again, John uses the expression “born of God” in **1 John 5:18**, where it is used twice exactly in the same manner.

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

The expression “born of God” used in both instances pertain to the same subject — *an inability to sin*. These two verses, **1 John 3:9** and **1 John 5:18** have to do with that which emanates from God, and pertains to an individual who is walking in connection with the light. These two verses do not pertain to **1 John 1:8-10**, where sin is seen in the lives of the believers and they would be lying if they say they have no sin. The subject at hand here is directed specifically to an individual who is walking in darkness. A proper understanding then would necessitate applying the expression “born of God” to the appropriate context to which it is used in the verse. This is simply saying that one must put away sin (put away the flesh) and walk in the light (walk in the Spirit) to be viewed as one who is “born of God,” one in whom the power of God is working through him, because God is Light and He cannot sin nor does He bring forth sin.

The next expression “born of God” is used in **1 John 4:7, 8** in connection with *love*.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

When one loves others, he is “born of God” because God *is* love. The individual in this case is allowing the power of God to work through him when he loves others. Love emanates from God and therefore hate *cannot* exist. And the opposite holds true for individuals who hate others — they cannot be “born of God” because this characteristic is not of God. They, as Christians, are more aligned with Satan than with God. Again, being “born of God” or “brought forth from God” has to do with walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. An individual who knows this knows God, because he is walking in the light and allowing God to work through him.

The next reference “born of God” is used four times in **1 John 5:1, 4** in connection with believing that *Jesus is the Christ* which is inextricably connected to *loving, keeping His commandments and overcoming by faith*. Again, being “born of God” relates to walking in the Spirit by first believing that Jesus is the Christ which includes being faithful to His Word. If one believes that Jesus is the Christ, he will be faithful in all that emanates from God. If he does not believe that Jesus is the Christ, He will not act by faith in Christ nor is he being “brought forth out of God.” If one is *not* loving, keeping His commandments and overcoming by faith, he is *not* being “brought forth out of God.” This is how we know that we are of God.

The Epistle of Jude

The central theme of the Book of **Jude**, which surrounds the salvation of the soul, has to do with *apostasy*. There is a great deal of similarity between the writings of **Jude** and the writings of **second Peter**. The two Books deal with the same subjects: apostasy, false teachers and judgment. The purpose of **Jude’s Epistle** is to exhort kingdom believers to continue in “the faith” and to warn them of these false teachers and of falling away. Within the warnings, Jude addresses the severe judgment that false teachers and apostates will face at the judgment seat of Christ.

The English word “*apostasy*” is translated from the Greek word *apostasia* (Strong’s #G646), a compound word formed from *apo* and *stasis*. *Apo* (Strong’s #G575) means “away from” and *stasis* (Strong’s #G 4714) means “a standing.” When used together the meaning is “a standing away from; a defection from truth; a falling away.”

“Apostates” are saved individuals who at one time received the Word of

the kingdom, and then fell away to go back to the world, to deceiving doctrines. These apostates are the false teachers that Jude warned about. They taught false messages relative to the Word of the kingdom, denied the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and fell away to the error of the wicked.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. (1Timothy 4:1)

“Doctrines of demons” simply refers to doctrines contrary to what Scripture teaches; that which came through the tares placed by Satan. And the way in which this was done was by taking the truth of the Word and twisting, perverting the Truth. Jude wrote his Epistle addressing these false teachers and their apostasy. False teachings and apostasy was prophesied before the Church began, even during the days of Moses. The work of Satan continued at Christ’s first advent, with the tares being the Jewish religious leaders; and, during the inception of the Church, he placed tares within the Church to do their destructive work. The tares, who are the false teachers, were eternally saved and did have a good understanding of the Word of the kingdom. But they fell back and corrupted the Church, which grew in a distorted way, such as represented in the parable of the mustard tree in **Matthew 13:31**. And then we find in the parable of the leaven in **Matthew 13:33** that throughout the history of the Church the work of the tares completely leavened the Word of the kingdom. “Leaven” in this context meaning to completely breakdown. The leaven was placed by the “woman” in three measures of meal, which is the Word of the kingdom. The “woman” depicts Israel, primarily the Pharisees and Sadducees, who placed their own destructive heresies into the Word of the kingdom until it was completely corrupted.

Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:6)

The end result of this destructive work can be seen within the Church today — a complete annihilation of the Word of the kingdom. And, in light of this destructive work, Jude educates his readers to beware of such distortion and wickedness.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were

marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)

Scripture identifies these apostates and apostate teachers in two ways:

1. They turn the grace of our God into lewdness; and
2. They deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word *grace* in the Greek (Strong's #G5485) translation means "favor, gift, joy." Scripture reveals the numerous graces of God, some of which are His gift of peace, the Holy Spirit, His love, His Word, His Son and His salvation. And the word *lewdness* in the Hebrew (Strong's #H2154) translation means "an evil plan, a wicked device, mischief, a wicked mind." Therefore, we can translate the Scripture to mean this: *They convert the favor of God into a wicked device.* For example, they change the Word to benefit their own opinion in order to bring others to succumb to their doctrine and to their evil deeds. And many do this for profit and praise.

Second, their deceitfulness can be seen when they deny the Lord in several ways:

1. They deny that the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ are One.
2. They deny that the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh and is coming again in the flesh.
3. They deny that the Lord Jesus Christ will set up His literal kingdom in the age to come.
4. They deny the Word of truth, the Word of the kingdom, therefore they deny the Lord.

Jude gave examples of the iniquity of these apostates for our admonition, so that we can understand what to watch out for. Then, Jude provided warning by revealing what the consequence was for them and what it can be for us if we also apostatize. Jude presented the example of Israel in the wilderness under Moses. The people of Israel were granted God's gift of eternal salvation, were taken out of bondage from the land of Egypt (a type of the world) to give them an inheritance in another land (the kingdom). Regardless, Israel had no faith in God and rejected His authority, constantly complaining and speaking evil of Moses and Aaron,

whom God had appointed over them. And because of their continued disobedience to Him, He destroyed them all.

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in the wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. (Numbers 14:2-5)

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. (Jude 5)

Because Israel despised and rejected the authority of Moses and Aaron, an authority placed by God, they rejected God Himself. Likewise, a peril outcome will result for those today who reject God's will. All of Israel with the exception of Joshua and Caleb perished in the wilderness. It will be no different for Christians if they choose to disobey God's Word.

In **Jude 6**, we have the example of the fallen angels, "*who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode. He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day...*" During the days of Noah, these fallen angels fell away from the Lord, leaving the place that God had set for them. These fallen angels [those who had cohabitated with the daughters of men] were taken to "*tartaros*" which means "the deepest abyss of hades" until the day of their judgment. A companion Scripture to this is seen in **2 Peter 2:4**:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [tartaros, Strong's #G5020 meaning "the deepest abyss"] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah are yet another example to whom God gives warning. These people conducted their lives in the flesh, in wickedness, apostasy and sexual immorality, resulting in condemnation.

...as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh [fallen angels], are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

(Jude 7)

A companion Scripture is seen in **2 Peter 2:6**:

...and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly...

These examples were written for our admonition. These apostates are further described in **Jude 8** as those who *defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries* and in **2 Peter 2:10**: *those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.*

Likewise, Christians are under the authority of God as well as those individuals whom He has appointed under Him:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1, 2)

We are subject to every governing authority as they have been appointed by God, whether on earth or in the heavens. We are not to “*speak evil of dignitaries*” even if they are evil. Speaking evil of them is automatically speaking against the One who appointed them.

This includes speaking evil of Satan and his angels. Rather, we are to resist them just as Christ did when He was tempted by Satan in the beginning of His ministry on earth. On the day of their judgment, God will judge Satan and his angels and repay them for their deeds. A similar example is seen in **Jude 9**:

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he

disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

And then we see the example in **2 Peter 2:11**:

...whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Therefore, we should understand that a Christian's evil speaking of government, political leaders, judges and even Satan is going against the will of God. Instead we should follow the clear command of Scripture:

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men... (1 Peter 2:13-15)

Scripture reveals that going against God's appointed authority is to be seen as *apostasy*. In **Jude 11**, we are given three distinct examples of apostasy from time past that is just as prevalent today — "*gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah (Jude 11)*". These three apostates — Cain, Balaam, and Korah — are recorded in the Old Testament and present a complete picture of the characteristics of apostasy.

"*The way of Cain*" is the way of the man of flesh. This phrase reflects upon the account of Adam's sons, Cain and Abel, to show that one was disobedient and the other faithful to God. Even though Cain was the firstborn with first rights of the inheritance, he was not faithful to God, therefore he lost his inheritance. Cain worshiped God through his own will and efforts rather than according to the will of God. Therefore, we realize that the "*way of Cain*" represents the way of the flesh, and not according to faith. It represents man's view instead of the truth of the Word, and this is what leads to apostasy. We must consistently engage in God's word and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, so that we do not fall into man's corrupted view, following *the way of Cain*, which is apostasy. We will remember that it is Cain, the man of the flesh, who kills Abel, the man of the spirit. We also have a choice to walk according to

the flesh or walk according to the Spirit.

Abel was faithfully obedient to God's will and gave an offering acceptable to God. Cain refused the sacrifice of God's substitute lamb, which Abel offered.

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. (Hebrews 11:4)

The next characteristic of apostasy is “*the error of Balaam.*” Balaam was paid by Balak, the king of the Moabites, to curse Israel in order to drive them out of the land of Moab (**Numbers 22:2**). However, Balaam failed at doing this evil work, for God controlled his tongue so that when he opened his mouth he spoke only blessing.

Then Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me?” I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed them bountifully!” (Numbers 23:11)

But Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness” and was not prepared to give up his profit. Therefore, he devised a plan to separate Israel from the blessings of God by bringing them to commit harlotry with the women of Moab, who in turn invited them to turn to their god, Baal.

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people [Israel] began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. (Numbers 25:1-3)

Balaam was successful in leading Israel astray through his “doctrine,” and as a result of his teaching, the women of Moab were able to lead them to commit harlotry, to bow down to other gods. His “doctrine” was simply this: He told Israel that they had a covenant with God which could not be broken; therefore, they were able to form other relationships with other people and their gods. This led to God's anger and judgment upon Israel, including Balaam, who was rebuked by the Lord.

They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. (2 Peter 2:15, 16)

We can conclude in this example that Balaam taught that which was common and acceptable to most of the people, those who walked according to the desires of the flesh. He told them what they wanted to hear, because they had “itching ears.” And his whole motivation for doing this was greed — for money, for gain. We can see with regards to apostate teachers today that they act exactly according to Balaam, who bring in their own “doctrine” to corrupt the Church who has “itching ears.” The motivation for many of these pastor-teachers is the same — for profit, for praise. Their focus lies in building the Church for pure profit and they do this by enticing individuals with “great swelling words.” Their deceiving “doctrine” is this: that all Christians will receive future rewards and blessings irrespective of how they live their lives now, and they base it entirely upon Christ’s finished work at Calvary. And because the Church believes this lie, they remain in their carnal state, living a life of sin and ignorance. In **Revelation 2:14**, it is prophesied that this will be the condition of the Church in these end times, right before the coming of the Lord.

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

The third and final characteristic of apostasy is “the rebellion of Korah.” Korah was assigned the position of Levite priest by the Lord with respect to the operation of the Tabernacle. Korah, however, wanted to raise himself up above this position to be head of the people of Israel. This led to his rebellion against Moses and Aaron’s leadership. By finding fault and criticizing their leadership, Korah built himself up as a much better leader in the eyes of the people.

Now Korah the son of Izhar...rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?” So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face... (Numbers 16:1-4)

Korah justified his actions by convincing the people that *all the congregation is holy and the Lord is among them*, therefore any one of them had as much right to lead the people as Moses and Aaron. What they refused to see was that God had appointed Moses and Aaron alone for the task. Therefore they were not challenging Moses’ authority or Aaron’s but God’s authority. And this is why Moses *fell on his face*, because he recognized whose authority was actually being challenged. Unacceptable incense was then offered upon the altar of the tabernacle by 250 men and leaders who sided with Korah. This rebellion against God’s authority led to God’s wrath and judgment upon Korah and his entire group.

Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly...and a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense. (Numbers 16:31-35)

You would think that after seeing this destruction, the people of Israel who survived would learn not to go against God’s authority. But what did they do? The following day after witnessing the ground swallowing Korah and the fire consuming 250 men, we find that *all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the Lord.” (Numbers 16:41)*

The rebellion was not against Moses and Aaron but against the Lord. And because of this, the Lord sent a plague amongst the people who challenged His authority and 14,700 of them died that day. We can realize, as a warning to us, that God does not tolerate His children challenging His authority or those He appoints. In **Titus 3:1**, we have been given a clear reminder:

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

This command includes the elders of the Church, for they also are appointed by God. If we criticize them or go against their authority, then we are going against the authority of God. We are to speak evil or condemn no one, for Christ will soon be Judge and everyone will be repaid by Him for their evil deeds.

Jude reveals the three characteristics that lead to apostasy:

1. *“The way of Cain”*— acting upon our own will instead of the will of God; walking according to the flesh instead of walking according to the Spirit; walking by sight, instead of by faith.
2. *“The error of Balaam”*— being led astray by the “doctrines of men” and by the wisdom of men, rather than the wisdom and doctrine of Christ. The source of this apostasy is greed: the wages of unrighteousness.
3. *“The rebellion of Korah”*— challenging God’s authority by criticizing and despising His appointed leaders. When we go against God’s appointed leaders, we go against Him. This includes His leaders on earth and in the heavens. The source of this apostasy is pride.

The act of apostasy and false teaching will find itself characterized in one or more of these three types and will bring on itself the severity of God’s judgment at the Judgment seat of Christ. We must be careful not to form ourselves in any one of these characteristics, but rather be set apart, living according to the will of God. In **Jude 12**, metaphors are used giving a clear picture of what these apostates and apostate teachers look like and the severity of their judgment.

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (Jude 12, 13)

“These are spots in your love feasts” speaks of apostate teachers who deceive believers into thinking they are serving them by feeding them the Word of truth, but actually they are speaking lies only to serve themselves, i.e., for profit or gain. The second sentence uses four metaphors to describe these apostate teachers, in which the last metaphor reveals their future condition:

“They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds” is a metaphor to describe these apostate teachers, presenting them as clouds that appear to promise rain until the winds blow them away and they never deliver one drop. These false teachers use the Word to give “great swelling words” of promise but cannot deliver because their “doctrine” is deceitful and ever changing to suit those with itching ears.

Then they are further described as *“late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots.”* In late autumn the trees are expected to produce much fruit, but these particular fruit trees, the false teachers, have produced none with respect to the Word of the Kingdom. They may appear to produce this fruit but when late autumn appears, or at the time of the harvest which is the end of the age, they bear no fruit at all. Therefore, these apostate teachers have been judged and found unworthy to enter Millennial life with Christ. They are considered “twice dead,” which is a reference to the second death.

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
(Revelation 20:6)

The first resurrection refers to the out-resurrection from among the Church; those who will be chosen out from among the Church to become the bride of Christ. Those who do not get chosen will be hurt by the second death; they will not have life in the Millennial kingdom. In this case, these apostate teachers were born dead but were made alive by the Spirit, but now will experience the second death as they are not able to enter Millennial life, making them *twice dead*.

“Pulled up by the roots” refers to apostates who are not only without fruit, but are rootless, not grounded in truth. They will be found unworthy and then cast out of the kingdom. It is a similar expression to *being cast out as*

a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. (John 15:6)

The third metaphor describes these false teachers as “*raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame.*” The word *raging* is the Greek translation meaning “wild, fierce, untamed.” These apostate teachers are themselves wild and untamed in the Word of God, which will become clear when their works are put to the test at the Judgment seat of Christ. These godless people put on a great show, but lack any substance. They boast in liberty, but place the people of God in bondage to sin. Their shame will become visible as they face their Judge on that Day.

The fourth metaphor and final placement for these false teachers will be as “*wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness.*” After they have done their evil deeds and made their profits, they, like wandering stars, move on to other places to exploit God’s people again. They resemble wandering stars passing through swiftly, but God has reserved them for the vast blackness of darkness forever. This “blackness of darkness” refers to Gehenna, a place reserved for apostate teachers, the anti-type being “the lake of fire.”

A companion Scripture is seen in **2 Peter 2:17**,

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness...

Note that immediately following these metaphors concerning apostate teachers, Jude draws attention to the prophecy of Enoch:

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, “to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (Jude 14)

Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, is mentioned here for a specific purpose. Enoch is a type of the Church who was removed (raptured) from the earth to heaven before the Flood (judgment) fell upon the earth. Before Enoch was raptured, he gave a prophecy about “these

men,” the apostate teachers, and the events that would follow concerning Christ’s return. God gave Enoch this revelation some 5000 years beyond his time.

And just as Enoch was raptured before the Flood began, so also will the Church be removed before the Tribulation begins. But this will not happen until “these men” have done their destructive work of false teaching. Relative to this apostasy, Paul states the following,

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... (1 Timothy 4:1)

We can realize that by introducing Enoch at this point in **Jude’s Epistle**, God revealed the sequence of events and the timeframe in which all this will happen. Just as Enoch was raptured during the Seventh generation — *seven* in Scripture being a complete period of time — so also will the Church be raptured at the beginning of the Seventh 1000 year period. During Enoch’s day, the “apostasy” or “falling away” had occurred, and it was following these events that Enoch was raptured to heaven. Then, the Flood came. And during the latter days, again the falling away or apostasy will occur first, then the Church will be removed, and following will be the opening of the Tribulation, when the man of sin (Antichrist) will be revealed. Knowing this, we are able to discern the times and be ready. We must heed this warning and refrain from doing two things:

1. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived with false teachings and fall away from the Word of the kingdom.
2. We must not fall away and teach false messages relative to the Word of the kingdom.

Judgment for apostates and apostate teachers, those who teach that one can be saved by their own works instead of works emanated by the Holy Spirit, will be greater than any other Christian. These apostates were given the understanding of the Word of the Kingdom and then chose to fall back and teach in error. Because of this, they will seek mercy and repentance at the Judgment seat of Christ, but none will be given to them.

Jude provides warning so that we do not fall into the same error of

wickedness and lose our inheritance that has been prepared for us since before the world began. Jude concludes his Epistle with an exhortation to all kingdom believers:

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. (Jude 20-22)

Jude exhorts Christians to continue building upon “the faith.” The manner in which this is done comes by constantly engaging in the Word of God. The Word of God is our shield of faith. Then, Jude adds the exhortation to pray always in the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit is the only means by which one can be guided into all truth and plays an integral part in Christians being built up in the faith. Jude commands Christians “to keep yourselves in the love of God,” which is inextricably connected with keeping His commandments. Our faithful obedience to His Word shows that we are in the love of God. In **1 John 2:5**, it states: *But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.*

Last, Jude exhorts the reader to seek and wait for His appearing with godly fear, eagerly hoping to be found worthy to rule with Christ. This concluding exhortation centers around Christian’s awaiting Christ’s return in a prepared manner. Jude warns Christians to beware of apostates, making a distinction between them and those who are not. The focus here is to bring Christians to the Word of the kingdom or to bring them back from the error of their ways. We are to be compassionate to them, but to apostates, we are to minister to them the truth in godly fear, hating their ungodly acts and works of the flesh. If we reach them, we will have pulled them out of the fire, saved a soul from death, and covered a multitude of sins. Therefore, turning Christians either to the truth or back to the truth has to do with the salvation of the soul.

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19, 20)

This *death* refers to the “second death,” a separation from Christ for 1000 years in the Kingdom Age. Let us therefore continue earnestly in “the faith”—always, until the end.

CHAPTER FIVE – PART FIVE

BATTLING THE THREE ENEMIES OF GOD

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19)

Sometime in eternity past, God appointed Satan as ruler over the earth. Satan will continue holding this position until the Day when he is replaced by Man, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ and his co-heirs.

Satan’s fall brought about no change in his position as ruler, and no change will occur until the appointed time when Christ appears and is ready to take the scepter. The appointed time is set within the framework of the six days of work (6,000 years of redemptive work) followed by a Seventh Day of Rest (Seventh 1,000 year period—The Messianic Era) recorded in the beginning of **Genesis**. The beginning of this Seventh Day will mark Christ’s return, His victory over Satan, and his succession of the throne. And this was something known at a prior time when God designed and created the ages, a plan centered on His Son inheriting *all things* (**Hebrews 1, 2**). But until then, Satan rules over the earth, going to and fro, deceiving and tempting believers, trying to keep them from their journey.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the “god of this age” [Satan] has blinded... (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4)

Satan and his fallen angels are said to reside in the “heavenly places:”

...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places... (Ephesians 3:10)

These *principalities and powers in the heavenly places* refer to powerful fallen angels in the kingdom of Satan ruling the earth from a heavenly realm. Satan has an innumerable number of angels at his command who perform activities through counterparts in the human race on earth.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

There is a present warfare between *the rulers of the darkness of this age* and Christians. Satan and his demonic angels war against Christians because they know God's plans and purposes for them — to rule in Satan's stead, to exercise power and authority from the same heavenly realm where Satan presently rules. Therefore, these powerful angelic rulers are presently engaged in a battle against Christians.

Satan and his angels are striving for the souls of men and their means of doing so come in many forms. The crafty ways in which Satan and his angels use to deceive men are by seeking to counterfeit the work of God. Satan imitates God's work in order to deceive believers and to bring about their defeat. Through the work of the tares, these angelic rulers portray a form of godliness, but then deny its power. They twist the truth, lie and corrupt the Word of God. And Satan does this to disqualify man from ruling in the age to come.

Knowing this, a Christian must be properly prepared in order to resist the devil and consistently win the battle of spiritual warfare. Those not properly prepared will experience defeat, falling into the sway of the "wicked one." But if we are to stand before the Lord as an overcomer at His judgment seat, we will have to overcome each of the three great enemies of God — *the world, the flesh and the devil*. All of these three derive from the works of Satan. *Everything* that comes out of the world, the flesh and the devil is wicked and is of Satan. Nothing good dwells there. **The first of the three great enemies is *the world*:**

Do you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

God says that if we are friends with the world, we are His enemy. Note that the word "world" here is not referring to the place in which we live as a physical entity, nor is this referring to humanity in a general sense, but rather *the present system of rulership over the earth* and all that would be associated with that — from Adam to the end of *this age*. And therefore, everything connected with the present world system in this age is under

the control of Satan and finds itself to be opposed to everything that is of God. This is the reason why faithful Christians are described as aliens and strangers in this world during this present time. Christians are living in enemy occupied territory.

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36)

The Old Testament saints had acknowledged that they were spiritually separated from this earth:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth. (Hebrews 11:13)

If we are not set apart from this world, then we are a part of it; hence, we are under the influence and rule of Satan. Furthermore, since there is a breakdown of powers in the heavenly kingdom under Satan that rules the earthly kingdom, any person occupying a position of power in the earthly kingdom during the present age is merely occupying a position of power under Satan and his angels, as they rule from the heavens through counterparts on the earth. Therefore, as pilgrims and foreigners on this earth, we are not to get involved in the political arena that is presently ruled under Satan, nor are we to get involved or associate ourselves in politics through the act of voting. In doing so, we would be involved with the things of this world. What a tragedy to invest our resources in what will not last. To be consumed with this life is to be unprepared for the next.

The present world system is passing away and from the time we are removed to the Judgment seat of Christ, nothing will be the same again and nothing we look to in this world will have any lasting value. Everything will be gone — governments, nations, education systems, the internet, television, our home, our cars, everything we possess will pass away. Therefore, our security or our hope or our future or that which we desire is not to be for this world. Since we know that everything in this world is passing away and coming to nothing — why do we focus on how to fix the world or why do we try to control what is in the world?

“And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does

the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)

Rather, we are to have a correct mindset. We are to trust in the Lord and His plans for us, realizing that, “*The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*” (**Hebrews 13:6**). Man is never in control of anything; it is the Lord who is in control of everything, and it is a surety that all things He has prophesied will come to pass.

The works of His hands are verity and justice; All His precepts are sure. (Psalm 111:7)

Christ testified that He was not of this world, and we also if we believe in all that He says, are not to be of this world either.

“You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:23, 24)

According to Scripture, all that is in the world, which is influenced by Satan, is “*the lust of the flesh,*” “*the lust of the eyes,*” and “*the pride of life.*”

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15, 16)

These three characteristics are not of God but of the world and therefore, of the “god of this world.” Satan’s intentions are to keep the Christian’s focus away from God and His plans for him, plans to give him a kingdom and replace Satan as ruler. We can make a distinct connection between the characteristics that Satan possessed when he fell away from God and those that are in the world today — *lust, envy and pride.*

Lust means “to covet, desire, to set the heart upon or long for.” The lust of the flesh therefore is setting our heart upon that which the “carnal” or flesh desires. We can translate this to mean, “I must have,” “I can’t do without,” “I will be happier if I have this.” But what does Christ say?

And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness

[lust for anything], *for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*" (Luke 12:15)

Therefore, being carnally-minded would bring us to the wisdom of this world and of Satan as opposed to the wisdom brought forth from God.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

The carnal mind [flesh] always goes against God's commandments as its nature is to sin. Therefore, we could understand the lust of the flesh to be setting our hearts upon something which is other than God's word, with the deception that in having this our happiness and security is attained. This may well be our experience without even realizing it. One may be deceived into thinking: "The more money, savings, houses, cars, entertainment, insurance, etc., the happier and more secure I will be." Isn't this how most carnal people think? Christ provides an example of this very thing in the parable of the rich fool:

'The ground of a certain man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry."

But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21)

We see a connection to this parable in **Matthew 16:26, 27**:

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."

Rather, Jesus tells us this:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Second, we have the *lust of the eyes*. Now whereas the lust of the flesh has to do with covetousness with regards to material things, the lust of the eyes seem to deal with covetousness with regards to people.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. (Deuteronomy 5:21)

This command may refer to inappropriate sexual desire, however this can also be viewed as envying someone because of who they are or what they have [in this world]. The thinking is this: “If only I could have what he has, or be like she is, then my life would be so much better.” This is the lust of the eyes, also known as *envy*. Do not be deceived into thinking that someone else’s pathway is easier than our own. Such thinking would be contrary to the evidence of Scripture, for Scripture repeatedly says that *all* Christians must go through trials and tribulations for the testing of their faith.

...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in ‘the faith’, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

We are to be content with what we do have and when trials come our way, we are to patiently endure, knowing that testings will strengthen us spiritually and help us to mature in Christ.

Last, we have *the pride of life*. Pride means “boastful, self-centered.” We could understand this to mean having a prideful, self-confidence in who we are and where we are at right now in this world, apart from any reference to who we are in Christ. A good example of this is shown in **Revelation 3:17** with the Church of Laodicea:

Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—[in Christ].

Pride keeps us focused on the things of this world; pride tells us that we do not need Christ in our lives, that we are in control of everything and that we are better than others. This was the pride that resulted in Satan’s fall,

exalting himself above God and thinking that he could be better. Rather, we are to have the opposite characteristic of pride, which is “meekness.” The Greek translation for *meekness* (Strong’s #G4236) is “*praotes*,” which means “gentleness, humility, modesty.” When one is meek he is not self-centered, but centers on the interest and care of others. As a “new man in Christ,” this is how we are to act towards others, Christ being our perfect model.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering... (Colossians 3:12)

Note what Jesus said about believers whose good works are done in meekness:

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

Pride only promotes strife, but meekness promotes peace:

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct, that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)

Our actions will discover our condition on that future Day of the Lord. A self-check on our attitude would reveal how we are directing our attention to the Word of God [thereby directing our attention toward God Himself]. If we study the Word, we know Christ, because He is the Word. Studying the Word will transform our mind to know and do the will of God, for His glory and for our glory in the age to come. Focusing on Him will keep us from the things of this world and thereby from the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

The renewing of our mind replaces the mindsets and thought patterns that have a direct association with the things of this world and the god of this world, Satan. The Word, which is Life, will transform us from the “*old man*” to the “*new man in Christ*” and will take away the distractions, the deceptions of this world that tend to blind us and to crowd in on us from every direction throughout our day. This pressure of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is Satan’s way of corrupting the purity of our calling so that we should settle for much less than what God intends for us — glory in the kingdom with Christ for 1000 years. And which is better — to have eighty or ninety years of life in this age or 1000 years with Christ in the age to come? The answer of course is the latter, but then again, every individual has to make that choice for himself.

Many will rather heed the voice of Satan because it is an easier option to conform to this world than to walk in the Spirit, according to the Word of God. In several passages in Scripture, importance is given in setting the mind on things above, rather than things on the earth.

If you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:1, 2)

Setting our minds on things above relates to “the hope,” which is associated with the hope of an inheritance, the hope of ruling with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens and of the salvation of our souls. When we possess this hope, we no longer set our minds on earthly things for we know they have no lasting value.

A Christian must exercise a two-fold process which brings him to a level of maturity. He must *set his mind on things above* [on the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ] and at the same time, he must *put to death his members* [die to self] *which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5)*. This process will in time separate the believer from the world, from earthly things and bring him to desire the kingdom of the heavens.

But if a Christian refuses to be faithfully obedient to God's command concerning setting the mind on things above and dying to the flesh, and instead chooses to live for the world and to walk according to the flesh, he will make himself an enemy of God.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18, 19)

There will be two types of Christians at the Judgment seat — overcomers and those who will be overcome. One of the two outcomes awaits each one of us and each one of us will find ourselves in front of Christ in one or the other of these two camps.

The second of the three great enemies of God is *the flesh*. The Greek translation (Strong's #G4561) for *flesh* is the word "*sarx*" which means "the body (as opposed to the soul or spirit), or as the symbol of which is external; a mortal being; carnal; carnally minded; fleshly."

The body is made up of flesh and bones; and of itself is not evil. The soul gives life to the body, because the soul, which means "life," is in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**). In the beginning man was given an immortal body to house the soul and spirit. But after Adam's fall, the spirit died, the soul became corrupted and the body mortal. This brought about God's redemptive act for man, involving the death of His Son; putting to death His flesh so He could take away our sins. We also are to put to death our flesh so we can put away our sins, for when *the body of flesh controls the soul (our desires and thoughts), it brings forth sin and consequently death in the age to come.*

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires [the soul] and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin [the flesh]; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:14, 15)

Therefore, since the flesh entices the soul, we are to put to death our fleshly desires and instead live in the Spirit. We need to put to death our way of thinking and instead think according to His Word. In this way, we

can put away sin in our lives.

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin... (Romans 6:4-6)

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:10, 11)

Christ's bodily death and resurrection is a type of our death and resurrection. If we are in the likeness of His death, than we have separated our soul and spirit and have died to the flesh. Subsequently, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. By choosing to live according to the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have a way in which we can control and put away sin. We must allow the Holy Spirit [through the Word] to lead. In doing this, we will be on the right path to the kingdom. However, if we choose not to die to self, then we will never have the strength that is available to us from the Holy Spirit to stand against the wiles of the devil. The result is that we will be living a carnal and destructive life. All things done in the flesh comes from our soul, our desires, and is evil. This includes our thought patterns, which is why the wisdom of man is of no value. And this is why we are to follow the wisdom of God through His Word, as oppose to the wisdom of man.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. (1 Corinthians 1:26)

Putting to death the flesh is an *ongoing* choice as we have an ever active, ever dangerous sin nature. Paul stated, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (Romans 7:18)*

Therefore, the act of putting to death the flesh is a daily process, maybe even a minute by minute process. Those who choose to do this will inherit the kingdom, as Christ so clearly states,

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” (John 6:63)

Those who choose to live according to their flesh will profit nothing. They will not inherit the kingdom in the age to come. The flesh is the avenue Satan takes to tempt and deceive Christians. If we are not walking in the Spirit, then we have no armor of God and thereby no protection. Man’s flesh and the Spirit are always at war with each other. The potential of the flesh energized by Satan in the life of the Christian should not be underestimated. Given free will, the flesh will direct our choices, making us do what we should not do. The desires of our flesh are at odds with what the Holy Spirit desires for us -- to be free from sin, so that we are holy and acceptable and perfect before God on that Day.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-18)

A comparison Scripture is given in **1 Peter 2:11, 12:**

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

In the following Scriptures, Paul addresses the matter of being crucified with Christ, and that we are to remain dead to the flesh and live according to Him, whose Spirit is in us.

I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life [soul] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24, 25)

Our soul (life), which is in our body of flesh, is to be lived by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There are numerous Scriptures that give heed to walking in the Spirit as oppose to walking in the flesh, for only by the Spirit can we produce fruit that will qualify us to inherit age-lasting life:

For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting [age-lasting] life. (Galatians 6:8)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:13, 14)

Our actions reveal our thoughts. We are to put away thoughts that do not conform to the life and teachings of Christ. We are to discipline our body, kill fleshly thoughts, and renew our mind to the mind of Christ. A Spiritual transformation starts in the mind and heart. We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and shape our thoughts and behavior. This process is how we “die to self” daily and how we are able to conquer the flesh.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you... (Romans 8:9)

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:10, 11)

By walking according to the Spirit, by being spiritually-minded, the believer can put to death sinful deeds and have access to life in the age to come. Through the indwelling Spirit, we will be raised a spiritual body on that Day, just as Christ resurrected in a spiritual body.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the

things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:5, 6)

The Scriptures are very clear about how we are to conduct our lives during this present time. The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is no small matter and should not be taken lightly. We have been given a powerful spiritual gift, our Helper, to help us to fight our battles against wicked spiritual forces and to help us live as we are called, holy and acceptable to God. How can we take for granted the Spirit of Christ?

The Holy Spirit is dwelling inside each and every believer, but not every believer realizes how great a gift this truly is. We must not quench the Spirit or resist His teachings, but we must listen to the Spirit as He teaches us the Word of God and then we must do as He says. The Spirit prepares us for the Judgment seat of Christ so that we may qualify for Millennial life.

The third and final great enemy of God is *the devil*. Christians are presently engaged in warfare against “*spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” Satan and his angels battle against Christians in order to retain their possessed ruling territory. They will hold this ruling position until a future time when Christ takes them down. At this point in time, Christ, along with overcoming Christians, will take the scepter from Satan, completing God’s work regarding the purpose He created man.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit during this present dispensation is to acquire a bride for God’s Son. The Holy Spirit is working inside the believer’s spirit to assist with this mission. And the enemy, Satan and his angels, know these things. Therefore, they are presently attacking the flesh with all means, so that there is no move on the Holy Spirit in man to fight back and for man to even realize the purpose of his salvation. If Christians are kept deceived and blinded, then Satan has nothing to worry about or battle over. For almost 2,000 years now, Satan has been successful in bringing the Church to its “lukewarm” condition that it is today. Most Christians are not even aware that they are “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.*” But for the *very few* Christians today who do have the knowledge of the Word of the kingdom and who remain faithfully obedient, the enemy is there battling fiercely with trials and temptations. Satan uses many forms to attack Christians. He is the great

imitator. He counterfeits the work of God as he and his angels move against Christians. From the beginning of this dispensation, Satan was successful in keeping Christians from knowing the Truth when he placed “tares” (false teachers) in the Church to leaven the Word of the kingdom.

Today, the Word of the Kingdom is completely leavened in the Church to the point that it is not recognizable nor taught at all. All Satan has to do is keep the Church in this blinded condition. And one of the ways in which he accomplishes this is by causing divisions within the Church, specifically among those who are blinded against the few who do have the [epignosis] higher knowledge.

But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility, correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

Satan causes division by attacking the flesh, keeping Christians carnally minded in desiring the lusts of the flesh and the world, so that their mind is not spiritually discerned. With mature Christians, he is continually tempting them to fall away and go back to the lusts of the flesh and the world. Victory is achieved by resisting the enemy by means of surrounding oneself with the armor of God.

Be sober, Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in “the faith,” knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Peter 5:8, 9)

When we sin, we are walking according to our own fleshly desires and giving place to the devil. How can we possibly hear and receive God’s Word in this condition? The answer is: *we can’t*. Without the armor of God, we have no protection against the devil. But a properly prepared Christian who does possess the armor of God can enter the battle and be victorious time after time. In the Book of **Ephesians**, instructions are given on how to prepare for this battle:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

...Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints... (Ephesians 6:10-18)

By surrendering ourselves and totally submitting to the Lord, our strength will come from Him. But when we rely on our own strength, we can do nothing. In conjunction with our submission to Him, we are to put on the whole armor of God, so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil. And we should not underestimate the powers of these wicked spiritual forces (Satan and his angels), for they are very real and persistent. It is these spirits that we are fighting against and not individuals (flesh and blood) on the earth.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth... This is the first part of the armor that we are to put on. The Hebrew translation for “gird” is *hagar* (Strong’s #H2296) a girdle or belt, and means “to fasten your belt” or “to belt or put on or restrain your waist with truth” — “*to prepare oneself for action.*” If anyone had first-hand knowledge of Roman weaponry it was Paul because of his frequent imprisonments. He had closely seen many Roman soldiers fully equipped from head to toe. In preparing for battle, the well-equipped Roman soldier was trained in strategy, weaponry, defense and understanding the enemy. Using the Roman soldier’s armor as a visual example, the Apostle Paul describes the armor of God, the Spiritual armor, as a defense weapon against evil

spiritual forces.

The belt was a very important piece to the Roman soldier's armor. The soldier put around his waist a very wide belt which was the holder for a lot of equipment. Just as the soldier had his loin belt to put on every day to keep his armor together, so also we must apply our minds to the truth, understanding the enemy of our soul and being prepared for battle every day. The meaning of "truth" applies to the deeper truths of the Word of God, the foundational teachings that are specifically related to the knowledge of this very real conflict with Satan and the reason behind it — the battle for kingship. We are to understand and be ever mindful of this battle, so that we know what we are up against and what we are fighting for. In order to be prepared and be victorious in a battle, one must have a well-planned goal and be earnest in his efforts to defeat the enemy. Without this belt of truth, we would not be efficient in battle and our weapons would not be in place. Christians are to mindfully prepare themselves for this battle against the devil, knowing that their strength comes from God; and they are to be diligent in their efforts to defeat him by use of the Word of God so as to possess the territory. And this is what it means "to belt your waist with truth." Simply put, it is to prepare our minds for this battle with the strength of God. The Apostle Peter presented a similar example when he said,

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ... (1 Peter 1:13)

We need to do whatever it takes to focus our thoughts on the coming kingdom and the battle that we are engaged in against Satan for rulership. This belt of truth is having confidence in the Lord and in His Word, knowing that the battle belongs to the Lord. If we are *strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10)*, one has victory when he enters the conflict. We are to trust in the Lord.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness... The breastplate is the next piece of armor we are to put on. It is the "righteous acts" performed by the Christian that keeps him from succumbing to the devil's attack against the flesh, which gives birth to sin. In order for the Christian to overcome and be included in the wedding festivities as the bride of Christ, he must have put on the wedding garment, which is the "righteous acts"

mentioned in **Revelation 19:8**. Knowing this, Satan will attempt to keep the Christian from putting on his garment by tempting him to sin. The Christian must be fully prepared with righteous acts, being set apart from the world and putting to death the flesh. These righteous acts are seen in **Galatians 5:22**, which are the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. All of these righteous acts produce the wedding garment — and a breastplate against the devil.

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace... “Shod your feet” means to have your feet firmly planted as a messenger of Christ, proclaiming the good news of a future peace. As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation. (Isaiah 52:7)

There are two aspects to the gospel in the Word of God. One is connected to the “*peace with God*” and the other is connected to the “*peace of God.*” Within the overall scope of the gospel, there is a part of the message having to do with the “*peace with God*” directed to the unsaved (**Romans 5:1**) and there is a part of the message having to do with the “*peace of God*” directed to the saved (**Philippians 4:5-7; Romans 10:15**). This is exactly what is in view concerning the armor. Having one’s feet properly shod has to do with proper preparation relative to the gospel concerning “*peace,*” as it pertains to the saved, and therefore this would be based on the person already possessing the “*peace with God.*” Therefore, the “*peace of God*” is in view here, which has to do with the present aspect of salvation, the salvation of the soul, culminating in a future peace when the Prince of Peace is present, having to do with the future aspect of salvation, when the salvation of the soul is realized. This is the message of peace to which one is to properly prepare as a messenger of God.

In **James 3:13**, a distinction is given between heavenly and demonic wisdom. When a Christian is self-seeking, he is tempted to boast and lie against the truth. Scripture says this wisdom is from the devil. Heavenly

wisdom is first pure (holy, righteous), then *peaceable*, and gentle.

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3:18).

As ambassadors of Christ, we are to go about proclaiming the gospel of peace in a gentle and meek manner. The devil's ambition is to deceive Christians with lies concerning the gospel, thereby causing disputes and divisions in the Church. But when we are well grounded to go out and be messengers of the gospel of "the peace of God," then we can win against the lies of Satan, for his only intention is to destroy this gospel concerning future salvation. We must have our feet firmly planted and proclaim to believers the good news of the peace of God.

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. The shield of faith will protect us from the "fiery" darts of the devil. "Faith" is simply believing everything God says in His Word. **Romans 10:17** says,

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Satan is the great liar, imitator and deceiver; and he will twist God's Word in order to bring about the Christian's downfall. Just as he deceived Eve when he told her "*Has God indeed said..?*" (**Genesis 3:1**) and, "*You will not surely die*" (**Genesis 3:4**), he deceives Christians today.

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! (2 Corinthians 11:3, 4)

In **2 Corinthians 11:3, 4**, Paul was concerned for the Corinthian's faithfulness because of false apostles in their midst preaching doctrines of demons. He was concerned that they would receive the false messages.

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is

no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

We must stand firm in the truth of the Word. Our faith in the Word gives us strength to discern and stand against false teachers, especially those who try and deceive us by portraying themselves as holy men. And the more mature we are in the Word, the greater our faith and strength will be. If our thoughts and actions lead us away from what the Word says, then our shield of faith is not there, and we are allowing the devil to defeat us.

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:7, 8)

The devil will try to stray us away from the gospel of Christ, specifically the Word of the kingdom, by using men to twist the gospel so as to corrupt the doctrine. If one is not careful to study the Scriptures and test these spirits, then he in time may receive their false doctrine and believe it — *you may well put up with it! (2 Corinthians 11:4)*

A good example of this and the way we are to handle it is presented in **Jude 8-10**:

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said,

“The Lord rebuke you!” But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Michael, though opposing Satan’s deeds, did not revile against the “chief of blasphemers” of being a blasphemer. Rather, he was faithful to abide in God’s word, leaving judgment up to the Lord. These false teachers, who unknowingly follow Satan, do not know the truth of the gospel and speak on matters they do not understand, as natural people and not as spiritual people. Their understanding is based on what they share in common with the carnal and the world. We are to stay away from such people and not

share in their evil deeds. By exercising our faith towards God and His word, we will possess the “shield of faith” and will be able to stand against the fiery darts that the devil continually throws at us.

And take the helmet of salvation...

The salvation spoken of here is our future salvation, the salvation of our soul. In **1 Thessalonians 5:8**, “the helmet of salvation” is considered “the hope of salvation.”

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day [hoping and watching for the Day of the Lord], be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation [future tense salvation] through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:7-10)

The connection between the helmet and hope of salvation is the salvation of one’s soul, the realization of one’s inheritance in the future kingdom. This hope of salvation keeps the Christian focused on Christ’s return and the inheritance. It is this hope [Greek: earnest expectation] that motivates and encourages us to stay strong in the Lord and not to stray away. By not hoping and watching [preparing] for the Day of the Lord, a Christian may ignore such a great salvation and forfeit his inheritance. It would be very easy for the devil at this point to deceive the Christian through his fleshly desires. The Christian would be defeated, not wearing the helmet or the hope that protects his head and mind from Satan’s attack. The helmet or hope of salvation is the Christian’s hope of being victorious in the battle, of being an overcomer and inheriting the kingdom.

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

The parts of the armor previously mentioned are all used to protect oneself from the devil, but this part of the armor is the *weapon* that will be used to fight him back — *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*. The Word of God is “God-breathed” through the Holy Spirit and therefore is alive and powerful:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any

two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12, 13)

Everything we need to know to be victorious in our battle against the devil is in the Word of God. If we deny our flesh and walk according to the Spirit, then we will be able to separate ourselves from that which is evil. The word of God exposes the darkness (Satan) with light.

The Word exposes the devil's lies by revealing the truth. The way in which Jesus' fought back against all three of Satan's temptations was to quote the Word of God, and He began by saying, "*It is written.*" It is therefore the power of Scripture that our defense against the evil one. With the last temptation, Jesus rebuked Satan by saying this:

Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (Matthew 4:10, 11)

If we allow, the indwelling Holy Spirit will teach us all things and prepare us when Satan's temptations come our way. And if we study the Word diligently, we will be able to discern between good and evil. The solution during temptations will be to quote the Scriptures as **2 Peter 1:19** tells us:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

The Light, the Word of Truth, is the sword that we will use to defend ourselves against the enemy of our soul. Unfaithful Christians have a barrier to overcome — the god of this age has blinded their minds. Because of Satan's deception, Christians who do not believe in the Gospel of the glory of Christ will be defeated. They have no weapon to fight back, because they do not allow the Spirit to teach them. They think as the world thinks and they follow the doctrines of men, exactly the state of mind Satan wants them to be in. If we live and worship according to the flesh, we are actually following Satan.

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

The Word of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, teaches us the whole Gospel of Christ, and is the *only* weapon able to defeat Satan. Therefore, it should be a living force in our lives. In all things, whether in prayer, worship, or in our ministry, we must do everything in spirit and truth. For in this, we will have overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

CHAPTER FIVE – PART SIX

PATHWAY TO THE KINGDOM

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter. (Psalm 118:19, 20)

God's thoughts for His children are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give them a future and a hope [**Jeremiah 29:11**]. This future concerns ruling and reigning in the kingdom of the heavens. However, **Psalm 118** emphasizes that only "the righteous" shall enter the gates to the kingdom. Therefore, how we conduct our lives right now matters. We are not to waste our days living according to the flesh and the world. Once a believer is standing at the Judgment seat of Christ the door of opportunity to respond to the Lord is closed, and, if no good works abound, access into His presence cannot be permitted in the age to come.

In this chapter, the spiritual pathway to the gate of the kingdom will be introduced. This pathway begins the moment one is spiritually saved and ends at the Judgment seat of Christ. We will begin by looking at two gates in Scripture: one is the *narrow gate* which pertains to the "gate of the Lord" or the "gate of righteousness" and is the same as the "gate of the kingdom." The entrance to the gate of the kingdom points to the salvation of the soul and regality — ruling and reigning with Christ. It is first referenced in **Matthew 7:13, 14**:

"Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The pathway to *the narrow gate leads to life* in the age to come. This pathway is the direction that every Christian *must* journey if he desires to have his soul saved. And the Lord says that this way is a difficult path and there are *few* who find it. It is a difficult path because it is an unpopular way, not normal to the ways of the world, a world presently ruled under Satan. This pathway requires submission and sacrifice, most of all it requires us to lose our life in this age so that we can gain life in the age to come.

The second gate is the *wide gate* and *broad is the way that leads to destruction*. It is the pathway in which many Christians follow today because it is easy, popular and attractive, requiring no submission to the Lord. This pathway follows the desires of the flesh and the world. It chooses the path of self-gratification rather than the narrow gate of self-sacrifice. This pathway to the wide gate leads to the loss of one's soul and separation from Christ for 1000 years. For those who follow this path, they will not enter the gates to the kingdom of God.

Do not be deceived. This broad way to the wide gate is not the road to eternal hell for the unsaved. Jesus preached this message to His people (the saved) during His Sermon on the Mount. He warned believers not to follow this broad way as it would only lead to destruction. Therefore, this does not speak of eternal verities, but of millennial verities.

The second reference to the “narrow gate” is seen in **Luke 13:24-29**:

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’”

But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from, Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Jesus used the word “strive,” which is the Greek translation for the word “*agonizomai*” (Strong’s #G75) and means “to struggle (to compete for a prize), to fight for something, to labor fervently (with all your might).” Jesus exhorts all believers *to fight with all their might* to enter into the narrow gate to the kingdom. This will involve putting aside our flesh and walking according to the Spirit so that we can be able to accomplish this

task victoriously. It is the same exhortation that Paul gave in **1 Corinthians 9:24** in “striving for a crown” and “running the race.” In order to run the race and compete for a prize, we must discipline our body and bring it into subjection. Through faithful obedience to the Word, we can then be able to journey through the narrow gate that leads to the kingdom.

The parable of the wheat and the tares in **Matthew 13:24** present *many* Christians who did not overcome this life. They will try to enter the narrow gate, but will not be able. Following judgment, the angels will have separated the non-overcomers from the overcomers. Those who will have overcome will inherit the kingdom, but those who do not overcome will be separated from the Lord, cast out into the age-lasting furnace of fire (**Matthew 13:30, 41-43**). During this time, the Lord will have shut the door to the gate of the kingdom and those who were cast out will plead with Him, in deep sorrow and regret, to open the door.

But Christ will tell them, *“I do not know you, where you are from.”* Yet Christ knows all things, therefore this statement to these non-overcoming Christians can be translated to mean this: *“I do not recognize you as belonging to the group inside of the door.”* It is then that they try to prove their worthiness to be let in. But Christ again tells them, *“...depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.”* These Christians had no good works acceptable to God; their works were done out of their own will to satisfy man and not done in God’s will, to satisfy Him. These non-overcomers made no attempt to truly seek the Lord through His Word, i.e., *know Him*. If they would have been faithfully obedient to His Word, then the works would have been *according* to His Word and for His glory. During this time they will see all the overcomers from the beginning of Man’s Day until the present dispensation walking into the kingdom, but they themselves will be *thrust out*. They will weep and gnash their teeth, meaning they will be in deep anguish and sorrow; painfully hurt; a cutting to the heart.

A comparison Scripture to this can be seen in **Matthew 13:41-43**:

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous

will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear!"

The pathway to the kingdom must be journeyed for the duration of one's lifetime, with a rest in view at the end. This journey is therefore not a one-time event. Rather, it is a lifestyle of self-sacrifice implemented day by day. There are numerous examples in the Old and New Testament regarding "the journey." We see this with Abraham, when he journeyed to another land that God would show him. Then, we see this again with Ruth and her journey to the land of Judah. In each case, the journey involved producing "fruit" or good works with a view to an inheritance in another land. It is these "works" that will be tried at the end of our journey and will determine whether we are qualified to enter the gates to the kingdom or not.

The pathway to the kingdom involves good works based on three characteristics: **faith, hope and love.**

And now abide faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

All three of these characteristics must be seen in the lives of every Christian in order to be able to enter the gates to the kingdom. Then at the end of the journey, faith and hope will be completed, either by death or rapture, but love will continue forever.

"Faith" is simply believing everything God says in His Word. Therefore, our faith comes from reading and studying the Word of God.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

Jesus mentioned in **Matthew 4: 4**, that if we are to live by faith, then we are to live by *every word* that God says:

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

And through the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are able to gain spiritual wisdom from the Word of God. By and through the

assimilation of God's Word, we are able to strengthen our faith. This faith will also produce the hope of the coming kingdom. Even though we do not see Him or the kingdom now, we are to earnestly hope for this and believe that it is true, because God says that it is true.

Now faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8b, 9)

When we became a new believer, we put our faith in Christ. Again, “faith” is simply believing God. We believed that He is the Messiah, that He died for our sins, was buried, and resurrected on the third day. This new faith automatically did three things:

- 1) The believer was granted eternal salvation;
- 2) The believer was given the free gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit;
- 3) The believer was entered into the race of “the faith,” being *offered* a heavenly inheritance as an heir and son of God.

At this juncture, the journey to the kingdom begins. Once a person has been saved, he is to exercise “faith towards God.” By and through the assimilation of God's Word, faith will grow and works will inevitably follow through the process of laying aside the “old man” and putting on the “new man in Christ.”

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

The subject of works emanating out of faithfulness has to do with the salvation of the soul. We must diligently allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and then we must exercise our faith by being “doers” and not “hearers only.” Faith must not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the wisdom of God. We must search the Scriptures earnestly and then begin to put that faith in His Word into action. This is the race that is set before us and must be run continuously for the entire duration of our Christian life. Christians are to set their course straight to the narrow gate and hold

it there, not deviating; and they are to hold their course, after this fashion, “*firm to the end.*” This course allows them to realize their high calling and partake in the future prize.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

Faithful obedience to the Word of God is the central focus. True Scriptural faith and righteous works go hand in hand. We can have all the faith and knowledge of God’s word but if we do not obey it and do what He says, what good is it? It is like reading and understanding the assembly instructions to a piece of furniture that comes in a box, and then assembling it in an entirely different way apart from the instructions, resulting in a messy outcome.

Likewise, if we are not being “doers” of His Word, then we are not abiding in His will; we are going against God and doing our own will. This also will result in a messy outcome. Therefore, we have a choice to either do works out of faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Those who are faithful — those who take what is written in the Word and put it into practice throughout the course of their pilgrim journey -- will then be revealed as overcomers at the Judgment seat of Christ, for this is the only way in which they can please God.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

By exercising our faith, we can grow from *faith to faith*, moving our position in the coming kingdom from *glory to glory*.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation [salvation of the soul] for everyone who believes [those spiritually saved], for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16, 17)

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Our faith is never stagnant but it is either growing (going from faith to faith) or it is diminishing. As we engage with the Word of God (beholding as in a mirror), and begin the process of *putting off our old man* and *putting on the new* which means we put to death our fleshly desires and conduct ourselves according to the Spirit, then our faith grows and we put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not an immediate transformation, but gradual, as we begin to live by faith in what the Word says, going from one level of faith to a higher level of faith. As we make the progression from *faith to faith* then we shall be transformed from *glory to glory*.

This transformation begins the moment we make the choice to commit ourselves to God. Every day thereafter it will involve working out our own [soul] salvation with fear and trembling until we have achieved a full transformation. Then, at the Judgment seat of Christ, those Christians who have progressed from faith to faith and glory to glory, will receive glorified bodies and positions of rulership in the Messianic kingdom.

The daily process of growing from faith to faith begins with adjusting our lives according to the Word. It will involve making daily choices to stop the desires of our flesh and do what the Spirit says we should do. Faith cannot be separated from these works, because if we have faith in all that God says, then works should show our faith. And it is these resulting “works” that will be the basis for judgment. At the Judgment seat of Christ, two types of works will be tested.

One type is depicted by the group, “gold, silver, precious stones,” and the other type is depicted by the group, “wood, hay, straw” (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Works will be tried by fire and those works which are comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones,” emanating out of faithfulness, will pass through the fire unharmed. But those works comparable to “wood, hay, straw,” resulting from unfaithfulness, will be consumed by the fire. The former will experience the salvation of their

souls and positions in the Messianic kingdom and the latter will suffer the loss of their souls (though their eternal salvation unaffected), experiencing pain and suffering outside of the kingdom, separated from Christ and His light.

Divine good works (those done in the power of the Holy Spirit), classified above as “gold, silver, precious stones,” will result in God’s approval. These works are works done out of faithful obedience to God’s word. The following list provides some of these divine works that will be apparent in every Christian who resides in the will of God:

- 1) Studying the Scriptures, the “Living Word” (**Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:11; 2 Peter 1:19-21**)
- 2) Living righteously, holy (**Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 3:7**)
- 3) Loving God and man (**Matthew 22:37; John 15:9-13; 1 John 4:7; 4:20**)
- 4) Submitting to the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 4:30**)
- 5) Honoring prophecy (**1 Thessalonians 5:20; Revelation 1:3**)
- 6) Suffering for Christ (**Romans 8:18; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 4:1; 4:12**)
- 7) Being fervent in prayer (**Ephesians 6:18**)
- 8) Watching for His return (**Matthew 24:42**)
- 9) Possessing the “hope” (**Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 6:19; 1 Peter 3:15**)
- 10) Ministering the whole Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of grace and the Gospel of glory (**2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:1**)
- 11) Testing the spirits (**1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1**)
- 12) Worshipping God (**John 4:23**)
- 13) Confessing sin and then putting it away (**Romans 6:11; 1 John 1:9-2:1**)
- 14) Enduring trials and testing with joy (**Romans 5:3; James 1:2**)
- 15) Possessing the higher knowledge (*epignosis*); the “mystery” of the kingdom (**1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:1; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9, 10**)
- 16) Being stewards of the Word of the kingdom (**1 Corinthians 4:1; 9:16-18; 1 Peter 4:10**)
- 17) Possessing the fear of the Lord (**Acts 9:31b; Philippians 2:12b; 1 Peter 1:17**)
- 18) Transforming into the “new man in Christ” (**Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:6**)

- 19) Possessing the fruits of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9**)
- 20) Submitting to earthly governments, to masters and to husbands (**1 Peter 2:13-3:1**)
- 21) Dying to the flesh, and walking in the Spirit (**Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; James 4:7; 1 John 2:15-17**)
- 22) Putting on the whole armor of God -- overcoming the flesh, the world, and the devil. (**Ephesians 6:10-18**)

The believer must begin with the first divine work mentioned in the list above, for this is where all of the other good works proceed from. Every believer's good works proceed from their range of knowledge and wisdom given by and through the Word of God. We must first have the knowledge and instruction in order to know what to do and how to do it according to God's will.

The second part of the pathway that leads to the kingdom is *Hope*.

The word "hope" is the Greek translation for "*elpis*" (Strong's #G1680) and means "to anticipate, an expectation or confidence, to wait for something with pleasure."

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a "living hope" through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Because of His abundant mercy, God has "*begotten*" (Strong's #G313 and G1080), meaning to "be born or bring forth," us again to a "*living hope*;" and this "bringing forth" was made possible through "*the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" In other words, Jesus Christ's resurrection made it possible for us to be begotten (in the spirit), to a living hope — a hope of our future resurrection and a future life in glory with Him.

This *hope* then is associated with "*an inheritance,*" a future *salvation (the salvation of your souls, v.9)* and "*honor and glory at the revelation (revealing, appearing) of Jesus Christ (v.7).*"

Overcoming Christians will appear with Christ in glory following their approval at the Judgment seat of Christ. Immediately following the Tribulation, overcoming Christians will take part as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. This is why Scripture exhorts Christians *to always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...* **(1 Peter 3:15)**.

In **Hebrews 10:23**, Christians are exhorted to *hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering*. Christians are to assemble together to inspire one another in the “hope” of what lies ahead, and with greater emphasis *as you see the Day approaching*. We need to do this “without wavering” meaning “without faltering or without delay” but firmly having this hope in view. And the reason for exhorting one another in this “hope” is so that we will remain encouraged and will not become sluggish in our journey.

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. **(Hebrews 6:11)**

This “living hope” is the earnest expectation of the salvation of our souls whom Jesus, our forerunner, entered in for us.

...to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. **(Hebrews 6:18-20)**

This hope keeps us both sure and steadfast in our journey, anticipating entrance into the Holy of Holies, and being in the presence of the Lord. And Scripture says we were saved in this hope,

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. **(Romans 8:24, 25)**

We have this hope because of our faith in the Lord. His future appearing is the “blessed hope,” referenced in **Titus 2:13, 14**:

...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

The word “blessed” is the Greek translation for *makarios* (Strong’s #G3107) which means “fortunate, well off, blessed, happy.” This blessed hope is connected with the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. With this in mind, the verse could be translated to mean this: “*Awaiting that fortunate hope, which is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, who is Jesus Christ.*”

For this reason, Paul prayed that the Church would have a full understanding of “the hope of His calling.” Not having this hope would keep them from striving to enter the gate of the kingdom and the glory of the inheritance.

...that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe...
(Ephesians 1:18, 19)

Paul wanted the Church to have a full understanding of the “*mystery*,” which is the Church being offered ruling positions in the future kingdom. And connected with this “*mystery*” was the “*hope of glory*.”

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **(Colossians 1:27)**

All Christians are “in Christ,” but only those who are mature and faithfully obedient to His Word have “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

In **1 Thessalonians 2:19**, Paul makes reference to “our hope,” associating it with fellow Christians being crowned in the presence of the Lord at His second coming:

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

Paul made it very clear that Christians who do not have this “hope” in Christ for the age to come are ignorant and most pitiful.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep [died] in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [died], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14)

God exhorts all believers throughout Scripture to be watchful for the coming of the Lord — this is “the hope.” In **1 Thessalonians 5:8**, the “hope of salvation” is connected to faith and love, which is the pathway to the kingdom:

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

This hope has nothing to do with the salvation that we already possess (salvation of the spirit), but a future salvation (salvation of the soul) that will not be realized until the coming of the Lord.

In **1 Timothy 1:1**, Paul refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as “our hope.”

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope...

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2, 3)

When we have *this hope*, we strive to be faithfully obedient to the commands of God, and to be prepared for His coming so that we will be victorious. Without this hope, our mind wanders away from God and our

hope reverts to the things of this present world. From the time of Paul's conversion, Paul kept his hope in God and never strayed away:

I have hope in God, which they themselves (Jews) also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. (Acts 24:15, 16)

We must show and exhort others regarding “*the hope*” with a good conscience towards God. For why do we hope for things in this present dying world? Rather, we are to hope for those things that will have age-lasting and eternal value.

“Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,

And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Surely every man walks about like a shadow; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.” (Psalm 39:4-7)

The final pathway to the kingdom is “love.”

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

God is love, therefore love will never fail; love will never end. Love is one of the greatest gifts that God has bestowed upon man. God's love for us is “*agape*” love, the highest form of divine love attainable. How can we measure how much God loves us?

But God demonstrates His own love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Even while we were God's enemy, living in the lusts of the world, the flesh and the devil, He loved us, had mercy on our soul and showed it by sending His only begotten Son to die for us.

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:10)

Christ has reconciled us to God in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight. We must, in turn, demonstrate our love towards the Lord God and Jesus Christ, Who is our hope and our future salvation, our future inheritance:

“It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, that I am their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I am their possession.” (Ezekiel 44:28)

Not only will overcoming Christians dwell in the presence of the Lord, but they will also be like Him, full of power and glory. They will possess the “image” and “likeness” of the Lord and will be able to see Him as He is and not die. They will be justified as righteous during that Day of the Lord and will be ruling over the earth. Through the death of Jesus Christ, we were reconciled to God, in other words, our relationship with God was changed from enemy to friendship. This is what His “agape” love looks like. And can we see how our own choice to die to our flesh and walk in love through the power of the Holy Spirit has an impact on others, especially our enemies? This is why Jesus said “love your enemies.”

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...

For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?...

Therefore, you shall be perfect [complete, mature], just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-45, 46, 48)

This form of love is not automatic. We cannot attain this “agape” love apart from the process of maturity in the Word of God, since it is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of a faithful, mature believer. But as we make the choice daily to abide in His Word this will inevitably cause

spiritual growth in us and as a result change our character so that we walk in love. And the nature of this character towards others can be seen after this fashion:

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

This is what “agape” love looks like. We have the choice to love one another after this fashion through the Spirit. We must love Him and others in this way because God first loved us. For what does God say?

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:8-11)

“Agape” love is unconditional, not based solely on feelings. This kind of love goes against the flesh, against natural human inclination. It is a giving, selfless, expect-nothing-in-return kind of love. It is a godly love that has nothing to do with evil, but only seeks the truth. This love accepts hardship, rejection or persecution and continues unabated to encourage and seek peace. It is a love that is not easily angered or over-sensitive. This love desires good in others and puts others needs before self. It is a love that is gentle with others, not rude or arrogant. It is a form of love that beholds the image and nature of God. This is the kind of love that we should be diligent to possess and to give to others. Paul knew how great the love of Christ was. In **Ephesians 3:14-19**, he bowed down on his knees to God and prayed that He would grant the Church to know this “agape” love, which is the greatest gift of God.

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to

be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

What an extraordinary gift the love of Christ presents in that we have the ability to be filled with all the fullness of God! The way in which we can show this love for Christ and show that the love of Christ is in us, is to show it to our brothers and sisters in Christ. But do not be deceived into thinking that we can make the choice as to who we are to give this love to. This act lacks faithful obedience to God.

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal [millennial; age-lasting] life abiding in him.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:14-18)

To love strictly in word is to speak loving words but to stop short of doing anything to prove that love. We must love in deed and in truth to what we say. We can be assured that we are on the right pathway to the kingdom when we demonstrate self-sacrificial “agape” love to our brethren. Love for our fellow believers is evidence that one has passed from death unto life in the age to come. But if we hate our brother we will abide in death in the age to come, for we are considered children of the devil:

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)

And who does Scripture say is our brother?

Then one said to Him, Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You. But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers? And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!

For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” (Matthew 12:47-50)

Those “in Christ” *who do the will of the Father* are our brothers and sisters. We are to show this “agape” love to them. In **2 Peter 1:5**, the process of abundantly “adding to our faith” is explained. We see that the characteristics we are to add in our walk of faith increase until we have reached the ultimate one, from “brotherly kindness to love.” This process moves us to maturity and good works that provides an abundant entrance into the Millennial kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Brotherly kindness, which is “*phileo*” love, means “love of the brethren.” Brotherly kindness is a love of keeping company and associating with those who are of like mind. It is something we desire as we mature in the Word. When we love our brethren then we are obedient to God and this shows that we truly love the Lord.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also...For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. (1 John 4:20, 21; 5:3)

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (John 15:12-14)

Love inspires us to sacrifice our needs for the needs of our brethren. Love for our spouses signifies the marriage relationship between the Church (overcomers) as the Bride and Christ as the Husband. The marriage relationship is seen as “one body” just as Christ and the Church are one body. Yet, God formed Eve only out of Adam’s rib, just as the bride (to

be) was formed out of Christ's rib. Therefore the "two become one flesh" and the love and submission that one has for his/her spouse will reflect on the love and submission that he/she has for Christ. The commitment, honor, and submission that spouses give each other are a test of their faithful obedience to God. It will prove their worthiness as the bride of Christ one day.

We can love in this way because Christ dwells within us. Christ has an "agape" heart and if He dwells within us, hatred never has to rule over us. Christ has a forgiving and understanding heart. If He lives within us, mercy will abide in our relationships with our brethren and our spouse. Christ has an unselfish and humble heart. If He lives in us, we will seek the needs of others before ourselves. More so, Jesus' greatest desire was to do His Father's will because He loved Him. This is the "agape" love that we should all aspire to have — to be obedient to our Father's will because we love Him. This is the essence of being Christ-like.

In **John 15:12-14**, Christ commands us to love one another as He has loved us. How much did He love us? *Christ laid down His life for us.* The supreme example of love is Jesus' humility in sacrificial service. Therefore, Jesus is our model for love. If believers obey His command to love, they enjoy the intimacy of His friendship. Note that friendship develops as the result of obeying His command to love.

Faith, Hope and Love is the pathway to the gate of the kingdom.

CHAPTER FIVE – PART SEVEN

SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION

The Apostle John wrote five Books in the New Testament: the Gospel of **John**, the three Epistles of **John** and the Book of **Revelation** — all of which are quite unique in comparison to any other Book in the New Testament. The Gospel and the first Epistle of **John** address the beginning, parallel to **Genesis one**, and is a revelation of Jesus Christ. These books cover *His first advent* at the beginning of this dispensation (**John 1:1; 1 John 1:1, 5:7**), whereas the Book of **Revelation** is a further revelation of Jesus Christ covering *His second advent* at the end of this dispensation (**Revelation 1:1-8**). It begins with the removal of the Church, then with God’s dealing with the nation of Israel during and following the Tribulation and with events leading to the close of this age. Last, it covers through to the Messianic Era (the 7th one thousand-year period) and ends with a synopsis of the Eternal Ages beyond.

The Book of **Revelation** deals with both the Church and Israel with respect to judgment and redemption. God deals with the Church first for a revealed purpose, to remove and separate them from His dealings with Israel. Just as Enoch, a type of the Church, was removed before the Flood (type of the Tribulation), so also will the Church be removed before the Tribulation begins. Christ chose John to be an eyewitness to matters surrounding the Church and Israel, so that man would understand the purpose for his creation and the amazing future that God has in store for His firstborn sons — all having to do with regality.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. (Revelation 1:1-3)

The word “revelation” is the Greek translation for *apokalupsis* (“apocalypse”), which means to “reveal, disclose, uncover, unveil.” The Book of **Revelation** is an unveiling of things yet future through God’s Son. Jesus Christ is *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John*

1:14). Christ came the first time to deliver the message of the kingdom and to reveal all that is spoken by God within the Old Testament Scriptures. This is the manner in which God set forth to make known His plans and His purposes to man. Furthermore, God “signified” (with “signs”) this revelation to John by His angel (**Revelation 1:1b**) — knowing that *angels are ministering spirits sent forth by God for those who will inherit salvation* (**Hebrews 1:14**).

Blessings await all believers that read, hear and keep the things written in this Book. *All of Scripture leads to these end time events; it is where all of God’s Word points to — the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.* The Book of **Revelation** is a revealing of this very thing. It is proper then to place the Book of **Revelation** at the end of God’s Word, to show us the end of things to come. And the reason for the importance of keeping these last words is this: *“for the time is near.”*

The first four chapters of the Book of **Revelation** address seven literal Churches that were located in the region of Asia at the beginning of this dispensation. The seven Letters were addressed to the *angels* of the seven Churches who have authority over and the responsibility to minister to the Churches. John was removed from the earth and placed, at a future time, in the Lord’s Day in heaven. John was placed in the Lord’s Day to witness the events that would transpire and then to record it. These seven Churches represent seven spiritual conditions that apply to individuals today and that are addressed by Christ at His judgment seat. Furthermore, these seven Churches represent all of Church history from Pentecost to the Rapture. The events of the Judgment seat of Christ, revealed in the first three chapters of **Revelation**, provide a word-picture of *all* Christians being raptured from the earth to heaven to face their Judge and to give an account of all their works done in the body.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

The greetings to the seven Churches in **Revelation 1:4, 5** were delivered from all three Persons of the Godhead: God the Father (*from Him who is and who was and who is to come*, which denotes a timeless existence and a future return without any ending), Jesus Christ, *the faithful witness*, and *the seven Spirits who are before His throne*. The seven Spirits represent

the sevenfold nature of the Holy Spirit and may also be translated “*the sevenfold Spirit.*” In **Isaiah 11:2**, the sevenfold nature of the Holy Spirit is disclosed: *The Spirit of the Lord* [i.e. deity] *shall rest upon Him* [Christ], *the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

The opening greeting to the Churches reveals that the complete Triune God will be present at His throne at the Judgment seat of Christ. All three are uniquely connected and yet inexplicably separate in function regarding God’s creation. Reference is made to Jesus Christ in three capacities:

1. *The faithful witness* — He is the Word who came in the flesh and was a faithful witness to all; 2. *the firstborn from the dead* — a reference to His resurrection, never to die again; 3. *the ruler over the kings of the earth* — His firstborn status is connected to His position as ruler over the earth, a position yet to be realized when He comes the second time in glory as King of kings.

And because Christ loved us, His sacrificial death on the Cross made it possible for us to be freed from the bondage of sin and was the basis for all redemptive work (Justification, sanctification and glorification). Because of this, He has made Christians “kings and priests” (a kingdom of priests) during the coming Messianic Era, granted they also suffer through “death to self” in this life. This will qualify them to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens.

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. (Revelation 1:7)

The appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ encompasses end time events beginning with the rapture of the Church and ending after the Tribulation. Therefore, the whole matter surrounding Christ’s return through a series of events is to be viewed as *one* return or *one* coming.

And during the events of His return, He will be accompanied by angels. The reference to *He is coming with clouds* indicates Christ coming with an innumerable company of angels. “Clouds” in Scripture denotes both “deity” and “angels;” and could be referenced here as “*clouds of angels connected with deity.*” At some point in time, whether at the rapture,

Tribulation or judgment, *every eye will see Him*, the saved and unsaved. Since all individuals will be judged at one point in the future, all will stand before Him and see Him. And many of the Jews who see Him at His coming will mourn, because they had rejected their Messiah -- *they who pierced Him (Revelation 1:7b)*.

John began his testimony of what he saw and heard:

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." (Revelation 1:9-11)

John stated that he was on a remote island called Patmos for the purpose of revealing the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. God had chosen to isolate John to a remote place, something that He had done with other prophets and apostles before, for the purpose of attaining his undivided attention from the outside world. John was there to capture and record everything he saw in regards to end time events so that man would know and understand God's purpose for them. We can place our hope in that which John experiences and describes next.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day... (Revelation 1:10)

This verse could be translated to read, "*I became in spirit on the Lord's Day.*" John was removed (raptured) from the island of Patmos and was transported to the Lord's Day, to a future time (such as time travel), some 2000 years in the future. This was *not* a vision or a dream — John was *physically* present as the events were taking place! John's transportation to the heavens is an awesome reminder that we also will have such an experience. This transportation will be accomplished by two means: one, by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and two, by the powerful voice of God.

The word “Lord’s” is the Greek definition (Strong’s #G2960) meaning “belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ;” and “Day” (Strong’s #G2250) means “period, judgment, time.” Within this context, such as seen in the writings from the prophets in the Old Testament referring to “*The Day of the Lord,*” this is connected with Christ’s judgment and cleansing upon man, and this Day or time will not end until Christ’s judgment has ended (a period of 1000 years) and then He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. Therefore, while John was being removed from the earth to heaven 2000 years in the future, traveling to the end of this dispensation, the Church was also being removed to heaven at the same time. The sound of the “trumpet” which John heard was the sign that the Lord’s Day had begun and the rapture had occurred.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet... (Revelation 1:10)

This sign is also given in **1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17:**

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be ‘caught up’ [Translation for Greek word “harpazo” (Strong’s #G726) meaning “caught up”; “rapture”] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

John heard the powerful voice of the Lord instructing him to write everything that he saw and to give his written testimony to the seven Churches [all Christians]. John saw the complete Church before him, from the seven Churches at the beginning of this dispensation to all Christians at the end of this dispensation, in Christ’s presence — at the Judgment seat of Christ. Therefore, this includes all of us!

The number “seven” in Scripture denotes *completeness for that which is in view*, and in this case, the “seven” Churches depicts the “complete” Church from the beginning to the end of this dispensation. John described the Judgment seat of Christ, in which he saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of them he saw Christ in all His glory:

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the

seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. (Revelation 1:12-17)

The seven golden lampstands were revealed by Christ to be the seven Churches (**Revelation 1:11**). Lampstands are devices that hold light or produce light; it is a holder or base for holding light high up to be seen. Therefore, these lampstands symbolize Christians who possess the light for all to see, which Jesus described more clearly in **Matthew 5:14-16**:

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

In **Exodus 25:32; 37:17**, instructions were given to Moses pertaining to the creation of the lampstand, called the Menorah. It was perhaps the loveliest ornament in the tabernacle and it stood in the Most Holy Place, opposite the table of showbread. All the elements of the lampstand were to be made from one solid piece of gold with seven lamps placed on top of it. The fact that it was all made of gold denotes worthiness and value. God commanded the Levite priests to place this lampstand in the tabernacle as part of the earthly sanctuary (**Hebrews 9:1, 2**). However, all the pieces of furniture and worship items to include the gold lampstand from previous temples are missing in “Ezekiel’s temple,” which will be the earthly Messianic temple built at the beginning of the Millennial kingdom and will function as Christ’s dwelling place for His 1000-year reign. The reason the items are missing is because Christ will replace all these items with His presence in the Temple. *He is the Light* and therefore there will be no need of a lampstand in His temple. In **Zechariah 4:1**, the vision of the lampstand and the olive trees are depicted as being a gold

lampstand with seven lamps, which are the eyes of the Lord, and provide a word-picture of the sevenfold Spirit burning on top of the lampstand, in which the lampstand represents Christ the Lord.

In the heavenly sanctuary, in the kingdom of the heavens, there will also be no need of a lampstand, for Christ and His bride will replace the lampstand in the Most Holy Place during the Messianic Era. Another interesting thing to note is that in **Revelation 4:5b**, John saw *seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God*. Lamps are placed on top of a lampstand. Therefore, these seven lamps, which represent the fullness of the sevenfold character of the Holy Spirit described in **Isaiah 11:2**, were on top of the seven lampstands, which are the seven Churches.

“The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.” (Revelation 1:20)

The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches who presently rule over the earth. The angel’s responsibility is to minister to the Churches in the present age. Since angels will relinquish their crowns to the bride in the Messianic Era, they will then be made lower than the bride. During the Millennium, the bride will judge angels from the kingdom of heaven.

Do you know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3)

All Christians, i.e., the complete Church, will be raptured to the Judgment seat of Christ in heaven, but after the testing of their works are completed and they have been judged, only a part of the Church (the faithful overcomers) will become Christ’s bride and will participate in ruling and reigning in the kingdom. This is why the Lord warned the Church that if they do not repent and do their first works, their lampstand will be removed from its place (**Revelation 3:5**). This means that their position in the kingdom will be removed. The seven golden lampstands therefore represent the complete Church in Christ’s presence awaiting judgment.

When the bride is revealed there will still be seven Churches, a complete number of that which is in view although the *actual* number of individuals

is not known. God's work relative to the Church is presented as complete at this time. The Spirit will have completed His 2,000 year search for a bride for God's Son. This will also complete Christ's high priestly work (in the order of Aaron) on behalf of Christians and matters after this point can only point to Christ's work as Judge. In the midst of the seven golden lampstands, John saw Christ in all His glory. The description of the Lord is very similar to that of Daniel's vision in **Daniel 7:9**, of Ezekiel's vision in **Ezekiel 1:26**, in **Matthew 17:2** and in **Revelation 4:1**. They all depict Christ as Judge. The garment described in **Revelation 1:13** is a judge's robe. The girdle seen about Christ's chest is the accessory worn by a judge, not a priest. A priest wore the girdle around his waist. And the reference to Christ as the "Son of Man" is a Messianic title referenced in **Daniel 7:13**.

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire.

His white hair symbolizes justice, purity and glory. Fire is also a symbol of judgment.

His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

His feet like brass and the sound of His voice reveals Christ's authority and power. The two-edged sword, His Word, represents power and judgment.

His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength depicts His covering of glory shining forth. *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.* John's initial reaction was fear. He was overwhelmed by the glory of the Lord and he fell before Him not being able to move, as when one faints or is in shock.

In that coming Day, every Christian will stand before Christ the Judge and see His eyes "like a flame of fire" and hear His voice "as the sound of many waters" and see His face and body "like the sun shining in its strength," full of power and glory. Our reaction will be no different than John's as we will experience great fear in the presence of the Lord. But Christ told John not to be afraid:

But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” (Revelation 1:17-19)

Christ placed His hand on John to console him and to affirm that He had the power over Hades and Death. By recalling the following statement Jesus previously made to him and the rest of the disciples, this would have eased John’s fear:

“Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (John 14:1-4)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

And this will be the case for overcoming Christians who have wholeheartedly followed the Lord during their lifetime. Christ will tell them, “*Do not be afraid.*” This, however, will not be the case for non-overcoming Christians. They will stand before Christ with great fear and will not be consoled. Rather, they will be cast out weeping and wailing bitterly, some bound hand and foot.

As John saw the Church appearing before Christ in judgment, Christ told him to *write*:

“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” (Revelation 1:19)

Pertaining to “*the things which you have seen,*” this refers to the events which John had just experienced — being transported into the Lord’s Day in heaven along with the Church being removed as well.

Then, “*the things which are*” refers to the events which John was

witnessing at the time, following the removal of the Church to heaven, which includes the seven Epistles to the Churches regarding judgment. And because the Epistles were showing a history of the Churches relative to the Word of the kingdom, “*the things which are*” also includes the condition of the Church during the present dispensation.

Last, “*the things which will take place after this*” refers to the events occurring following the judgment of Christians — which is seen occurring within **Revelation** chapter **four** through the end of the Book, to include the relinquishing of the angel’s crowns, Christ opening the seals, the start of the Tribulation, and all the events following that lead to Christ’s return, the establishment of His kingdom for 1000 years, and then the kingdom being delivered to God the Father after Satan, Hades and Death is destroyed, bringing in the Eternal Ages.

John wrote seven Epistles to seven literal Churches during his day and he wrote what he witnessed *in heaven*. The Epistles present events surrounding the Judgment seat of Christ and depict the history and condition of Christendom during the present dispensation. Each Epistle to the Churches is structured exactly the same way, in the following particular fashion:

1) Recognition of works: “*I know your works.*”

The basis for all judgment in Scripture is *works*. God judged sin at Calvary on the basis of His Son’s finished work. Christians will be judged at the end of this present dispensation on the basis of works; works emanating out of faithfulness or works emanating out of unfaithfulness. We see these two types of works presented in **1 Corinthians 3:12** as either *gold, silver, precious stones* (faithful works) or *wood, hay, straw* (unfaithful works) that will be tried by fire at the Judgment seat of Christ. The first works will pass through the fire unharmed but the second works will be consumed by the fire. The first group will acquire their inheritance into the kingdom, but the second group will suffer loss, losing their inheritance and the salvation of their soul.

That which is dealt with at the Judgment seat of Christ will be whether the Christian was faithfully obedient to the Word or not during his lifetime—this will determine whether one’s works were good or bad. This is why Christ’s words in all seven Epistles to the Churches address “*works*” first, because this is what is centrally in view when it comes to judgment.

And this is not judgment relative to their eternal salvation, but judgment relative to what lies immediately following this age — the Messianic Era; the 1000 year reign of Christ.

2) A call to repent and heed the Lord's command:

The word “repent” is the translation of the Greek word (G3340) *metanoeo* which means “to think differently, re-consider.” It is a call to renew the mind or to change the mind so that one can transform from unholy to holy. We see this in **Romans 12:2**,

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The act of repentance is to turn from unrighteous to righteous acts, from unfaithfulness to faithfulness. Repentance is *always* directed towards those who already believe, but who have strayed away from the faith. An unsaved person cannot repent and return to his faith or do good works when he never had faith and good works. During Jesus ministry, He preached the Word of the kingdom and called on believers (Israel) to “*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (**Matthew 4:17**). Then later, following the inception of the Church, the tares were placed in order to corrupt the Word of the kingdom. This caused believers to fall away from the truth and follow a path of destruction. This is the main reason why Christ calls on Christians to repent or to “change their mind” and return to the truth of the Word, the Word of the kingdom. Without [the] faith and good works, one cannot inherit the kingdom.

3) An overcomer's promise:

The word “overcome” is the translation of the Greek word *nikao*, which means “to conquer” or “to gain victory” over something. Overcomers are those conquerors, those victors, who have successfully run and won the race of the faith, conquering the numerous trials that came along the way. The overcomer's promises relate to Christians alone, for only saved individuals are able to be entered into the race of faith. They can realize their promises and overcome *or* they can fail to ever realize the promises and be overcome [by the three enemies of God: the world, the flesh and the devil]. Again, with respect to overcoming, we are not speaking of [eternal] spirit salvation, the salvation that we presently possess, but of soul salvation, which is a future salvation, a salvation that is millennial in

scope.

Note that a warning directed to one of the seven Churches would also be applicable to any of the other six Churches, which means that the things commanded and promised in each of these seven Epistles deal with *all* Christians from the beginning of Church history to the end — from 33 AD to the removal of the Church. This means that all seven Epistles are directed to every Christian in every generation. And we can see that the rewards promised to each of these Churches and to every Christian who overcomes correspond to the exact measure of faithful works they produced in their life.

Many of the examples set forth in the **Matthew** parables, such as the Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant in **Matthew 24:45** and The Parable of the Talents in **Matthew 25:14** are all connected to the Judgment seat of Christ. These parables present a word-picture of the Christian being judged based on their works in this life and then either being rewarded or rejected, depending on whether their works emanated out of faithful obedience or not.

The following seven Epistles are written for every believer's admonition. It reveals what has already occurred at the Judgment seat of Christ through the eyes of John and what will occur in the near future so that we can be prepared.

1. *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,*

These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place-unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.’”(Rev. 2:1-7)

Christ at His judgment seat commended the Church in Ephesus for their labor, their struggle for His name’s sake, and for their patience (patient endurance), because *they have not become weary*. Christ also approved of their abhorrence for the deeds of evil men and was pleased that they had tested the false teachers, verifying that they were liars. And the direction in which they had to have tested these false teachers was to have compared their teachings to the Word of God.

There are numerous Scriptural references that describe and warn Christians of the difficult path leading to Christ in the kingdom. Christians will face trials and sufferings for their belief. This is because they are set apart from the world, therefore the world hates them. They do not follow the world’s popularity views and immoral ways, therefore the world speaks evil of them, classifying them as “strange.” But with the armor of God, one can gain strength from Him and endure. If not, there is a big possibility that one will fall away and go back to the world. With the Church in Ephesus, the believers had initially loved Christ. What does this actually mean?

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. (1 John 2:5)

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. (1 John 5:3)

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; ...” (John 14:23)

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” (John 15:10)

The Church in Ephesus was initially abiding in the Word, following God's commandments, and doing works under the control of the Holy Spirit while their focus remained on Christ and the kingdom. But eventually they *left their first love* (**Revelation 2:4**). Evidently, the Church turned away from the love of the Lord by taking their eyes and heart off of Christ and the kingdom. A good example of this is shown in the Parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13**. In the beginning, the Word of the kingdom is accepted with great joy, but then because of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, the believer falls away and loses his focus in the Lord. His fleshly works are not acceptable to God and will not pass the test at the Judgment seat of Christ, as works must be done according to His Word.

In light of this, Christ instructed them to *“Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”* Christians are warned about their fallen condition and are told to repent. They are told to remember the goal and purpose for their salvation. Then, they are told to do the first works, works pleasing to God, done out of faithful obedience to His word, which reveals their love for Christ.

Christ told them to *repent* or “to change their mind and behavior.” This means to go in the opposite direction from where they are heading. This is done by first recognizing one's sins and asking God for forgiveness. He then forgives and cleanses so that the Christian is able to allow the Holy Spirit to once again lead his affairs.

Christ warned the Church in Ephesus that if they did not repent, He would remove their lampstand from its place. The “lampstand” is the “Church,” i.e. Christians. The *removal of your lampstand from its place* pertains to a Christian being removed from his position as co-heir with Christ in the heavenly kingdom. He will be cast out, as being disapproved.

One thing that Christ had commended the believers in Ephesus was that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The word “Nicolaitans” derives from the Greek compound words “*niko*” meaning “conqueror” and “*laos*” meaning “the people.” It appears that this group represented a Church consisting of clergy (or priests) who were placed above or superior to “the people” or “common believers.” From what history reveals, this group of ministers evolved into a ruling clerical order. And we can see how this

prevailed in man's religion today in which the clergy is elevated to a higher honor over their congregation.

Charles Strong, Bible teacher and editor, wrote concerning one of these religions, the Roman Catholic Church:

“This is prevalent in the Roman Catholic religion, wherein the clergy dictates non-Scriptural doctrine for the parishioners to follow, i.e., sacraments, confessing sin to the clergy, praying to the earthly mother of Christ, praying to the dead, venerating images (statues and symbols) of religious persons, the ability of the clergy to forgive sin, etc. Such practice represents a dictatorship by the clergy, allowing no independent thought of freedom to its members. Ministers of God were never meant to be better than those to whom they ministered. All are only “flesh and blood;” all are only human and as such, are all “one in Christ” with every other member of the “body of Christ;” and, each should never think of himself or herself as any better than any other believer in Christ. The New Testament says nothing of “clergymen” and nothing of “priests” except that all believers (children of God) in the Church Age are “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9).

Pastor-teachers are to act in accordance to **Philippians 2:3**,

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Another interesting thing to note is that the clergy or priests of the Roman Catholic religion do not condone reading the Word in their place of worship. They want their congregation to conform to their man-made beliefs and customs and not to the Truth. Furthermore, they make the congregation believe that only they are able to understand the Word, in order to build themselves up to be better than others. But Scripture clearly says this:

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have receive from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you

will abide in Him. (1 John 2:26, 27)

The practice of the Nicolaitans though is not confined to just the Catholic Church but to many other churches throughout the land today. Because of deceptive, man-made religions it is so important to study the Word of God, so that we will not succumb to false teachings and practices. Christ stated that He also hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. He did not say that He hated the Nicolaitans but that He hated their deeds or practices. Likewise, Christians should never hate the sinner, but must hate the sin (**John 13:34**).

Then, Christ inclined all who are interested to hear what will be addressed.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. “To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7)

What is the significance of the “*tree of life?*” God placed the “*tree of life*” in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:9b**) for Adam and Eve to eat of its fruit. Its primary purpose was to provide man wisdom and judgment which would enable them to properly rule over the earth, since this was the purpose for which God created man. The tree of life was not given to Adam so that he could live forever, for Adam *already* possessed immortality and “death” was not an issue until *after* Adam’s sin. Adam had lived in an undying state prior to his sin, but after his fall, this resulted in his disqualification to rule and therefore was banned from the tree of life and cast out of the Garden of Eden. Likewise, Christians, who already possess eternal life, are promised the tree of life in the Messianic Era if they overcome. The tree of life is reserved for overcoming Christians who will rule and reign as coheirs with Christ. The same tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden will exist again in the future and will hold the same exact purpose — to provide the fruit of wisdom and understanding in relation to ruling and reigning.

Solomon, in all his God-given wisdom, gave four references to the “tree of life” in the Book of **Proverbs**:

She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her. (Proverbs 3:18)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12)

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4)

In these verses in **Proverbs**, we can see the connection between wisdom and the tree of life. This tree is being reserved strictly for overcoming Christians during the Messianic Era — Christians who have the hope of the coming kingdom and who abide in the things mentioned in these verses, which are God’s wisdom, the fruit of the righteous, the hope of glory, and a wholesome tongue.

In **Proverbs 3:18**, “*wisdom*” is called the “*tree of life.*” We can associate this wisdom with Solomon’s position as ruler of Israel to correctly understand one part of the tree of life. Solomon possessed much wisdom and understanding as he ruled; and overcoming Christians must also possess wisdom and understanding as they rule, just as it would have been necessary for Adam had he ruled. The fruit of this tree will provide the necessary wisdom and understanding to govern in equity, justice, and righteousness in the kingdom. When overcoming Christians become heavenly rulers in the age to come, they will be allowed to partake of the tree of life, which will prepare them to rule effectively over the earth, each in their respective capacities in the kingdom.

During the Exodus under Moses, the children of Israel ate the Manna sent from heaven, a type of Christ, in order to sustain them during their strenuous journey through the wilderness. Today, man is to feed upon the Bread of Life, which is the written and living Word of God — Jesus Christ, in order to sustain them during their difficult journey in this world, during their race of the faith. In the age to come, overcomers will have the “tree of life” to provide them the fruit of wisdom and understanding during their rule in the kingdom of heaven over the earth.

2. *“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are*

rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” (Revelation 2:8-11)

The Church in Smyrna arose during a period in Church history that resulted in the greatest persecution of all time, in which millions of believers were martyred. But even during such great persecution, the Church in Smyrna grew and the believers were successful in spreading the gospel of Christ. Throughout the Roman Empire, the Church suffered persecution from the outside world but also from within their members. A group of Christians who called themselves Jews outwardly (portraying a form of godliness) but were actually of the synagogue of Satan, were murdering Christians. By disguising themselves as holy, they were able to discredit and murder members of their own Church. Today, there are Christians who teach false doctrine, denying the Lord Jesus Christ and His return. These Christians at one time fell away from the Lord and became involved in different sects and cults, some of which are known today as Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, the Unification Church, Jewish Roots Movement, New Age, etc. These cults should be avoided, as they also are connected to the synagogue of Satan.

Although these believers were subject to persecution and poverty, Christ told them they were rich. Their spiritual wealth far outweighed their material poverty, knowing that one day they would reap the rewards of glory.

...that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

(Ephesians 1:18b)

...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to ward us in Christ Jesus.

(Ephesians 2:7)

And through all of their tribulations, Christ told the Church not to fear these things. These trials and tribulations were for the testing of their

faith. If they continued to follow Christ, no matter the circumstance, nothing could separate them from Him. Though they may die, it is only their body of flesh that dies. Even so, Christ will give them a new body and will save their soul in the age to come.

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

...and you will have tribulation ten days (Revelation 2:10)

“Ten” is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing to “all” the days of tribulation. Therefore, these “ten days” must cover a complete period of time — the entire dispensation. All Christians will experience trials and tribulations during their lifetime. The Book of **James** teaches that trials are for the testing of our faith and should not be taken by surprise. If we are prepared for these trials when they come, we should consider them all joy knowing what lies ahead — the salvation of our soul (**James 1:2, 12**). Christians are to look upon such trials in their life in the same manner as the apostles looked upon their trials. During their trials, the apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (**Acts 5:41**).

The Christian who patiently endures temptations until their death is promised the “*crown of life*” (**Revelation 2:10b**). A parallel to this can be found in **James 1:12**,

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved [at the Judgment seat of Christ] he will receive the “crown of life” which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Overcoming Christians will wear crowns occupying positions of power and authority with Christ during the coming age. In fact, there are five crowns that could be obtained by overcomers: *The incorruptible Crown* (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**); *The Crown of Rejoicing* (**1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20**); *The Crown of Life* (**James 1:12; Revelation 2:10**); *The Crown of Righteousness* (**2 4:8**); and *The Crown of Glory* (**1 Peter 5:2-4**).

The recipient of the “crown of life” is given the assurance that he will “not

be hurt by the second death.” It is evident in **Revelation 20:14** that “the second death” is used in association with the unsaved. But within the context of Christians receiving the *crown of life* in **Revelation 2:11**, this second death applies to Christians — the non-overcomers.

The first death was our spiritual death from birth (due to the fall of man) until we believed and were born again; and the second death is our spiritual death, or separation from Christ, during the Millennium (for non-overcomers). For the unsaved, this separation will take place in the lake of fire *after* the Millennium. For non-overcoming Christians, it will be either outer darkness, Gehenna, blackness of darkness, or the lake of fire *during* the Millennium. For those who do overcome and are found approved at the Judgment seat of Christ, having endured temptations throughout their life until death, they will receive the crown of life. They will not be separated from Christ in the age to come [the second death], but will rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom for 1000 years.

3. *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,*

These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which things I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” (**Revelation 2:12-17**)

The city of Pergamos was situated on a high hill 50 miles north of Smyrna. Evidently, its inhabitants were followers of Satan who worshiped other gods (Satan’s angels). Christ commended the Church in Pergamos for holding fast to His name and not denying “the faith,” even in the midst of these city dwellers. Even under much persecution because of the Word

of God and the witnessing of the murder of their fellow believer, Antipas, they did not deny His name. But one thing that the Church had begun to do is add within its group false teachers, who were teaching and acting according to the doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans.

Balaam was a prophet hired by Balak, the king of the Moabites, to curse the nation of Israel so that they would be driven out of the land of Moab. But on three separate occasions, God caused Balaam to articulate blessing rather than cursing. Failing in his mission, Balaam instructed Balak to develop friendships with the Israelites, enticing them into sinful relationships. And because Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness,” he devised a plan to separate Israel from the blessings of God by bringing them to commit harlotry with the women of Moab, who in turn invited them to turn to their god, Baal. Balaam was successful in leading Israel astray through his “doctrine” which was simply this: that Israel had a covenant with God which could not be broken, therefore, they were able to do what they wanted and form other relationships with ungodly people and their gods. Balaam’s teaching resulted in blurring the distinctions between Israel and its pagan neighbors.

We can determine in this example that Balaam taught that which was common and acceptable to most of the people — those who walked according to the desires of the flesh. He told them what they wanted to hear, because they had “itching ears.” And his whole motivation for doing this was greed — for money.

Apparently, a similar seduction was taking place in the Church at Pergamos, especially in regards to the Church allowing those who hold the doctrine of Balaam to form relationships with them. And not only was the Church involved with those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, but also those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Therefore, they were allowing those individuals, who were following this ruling clerical order, to form relationships within their Church. Forming relationships with these ungodly people and false doctrines would eventually only bring harm to the Church causing them to eventually fall away from the truth of God’s Word.

It appears the doctrine of Balaam paved the way for the heresy of the Nicolaitans. Although the Nicolaitans instigated the distinction between clergy and laity, there is also evidence of a licentious sect led by Nicolas

of Antioch who advocated freedom in conduct and encouraged participation in pagan practices. The doctrine of Balaam allowed interaction with surrounding paganism and culminated in the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, in which promiscuity was actually incorporated into the activities of the Church. The Church professed to serve the Lord but in practice served man and his popular opinion.

John was well aware of these false doctrines and false teachers committing harlotry with the Church, and he warned the Church about this in **2 John 7-11**:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Every believer has the potential to fall away. The way in which we can overcome is through our faithfulness in Christ. Those who “transgress” meaning “running too far ahead” or “going too far” would relate to the Gnostics who considered themselves as having advanced beyond basic Christianity. In essence, they are very similar to the followers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Departure from Christ into doctrinal error indicates that a person does not have God. Love for God means supporting the truth and standing away from those who reject it. Christians should not only refuse to receive false teachings or to support false teachers in any way, but should also avoid relationships with them.

Keeping close company with deceivers signifies that one is endorsing their teachings. “To greet” someone means to identify with that person publicly. This can refer to the Church’s public welcome of a false teacher. The proper response to deceivers is to reject them if they do not adhere to the Truth. This shows how seriously we should take the Scriptures and how careful we should be in evaluating the teachings of everyone. Christ then tells them to “*Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*” (**Revelation 2:16**)

The two-edged sword is the powerful voice of God's Word. Unless the Church in Pergamos repents, Christ will come to them quickly (for judgment and condemnation) and will also fiercely judge the deceivers by His powerful Word.

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12, 13)

Christ concluded His Epistle with an overcomer's promise:

"To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."
(Revelation 2:17)

Believers in Pergamos were involved in pagan feasts, where they ate food sacrificed to idols. The promise is for those who repent and refuse to partake of these feasts and to associate themselves with these ungodly people, there will be a better banquet in heaven, as they share it special with Christ. The hidden manna will provide a supernatural sustenance to enable them to function effectively as co-rulers in Christ's kingdom.

In the Greek athletic games, the "white stone" was given to the victor in a contest. This symbol of victory for the overcomer at the Judgment seat of Christ comes with a new name, which identifies him in terms of his distinctive character. The "white stone" is a symbol of Christ as the pure living Stone, and we as partakers with Him, as part of His body, are also living stones, a holy priesthood in His kingdom.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him will by no means be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:4-6)

This holy priesthood or living stones (overcomers), with Christ being the Chief Cornerstone in the heavenly sanctuary, will make a more superior and glorious temple than that built by dead stones from man in the earthly sanctuary. And as each overcomer is given a new name by Christ, the fact that only Christ and he will know it indicates a very special, intimate relationship between the two. How encouraging this is for all who strive to be an overcomer!

4. *“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,*

‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts.

And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— As I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 2:18-29)

Christ addressed this Letter with *eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass* indicating His fierce judgment to the Church in Thyatira. This Church was commended for its growth in works and for their love, service, faith and patience. However, at the same time, they allowed corruption and extremely evil practices to come into the Church, the same evil practices that were instigated by the false prophetess, Jezebel, from the Old Testament.

Ahab, the son of Omri, became king over Israel and did the most evil than any other king of Israel before him. And to add insult to injury, he married Jezebel, a Phoenician and false prophetess who served the idol, Baal. She was involved in witchcraft and demonic practices and seduced Ahab to become a full-fledged worshiper of Baal, in which she was a priestess. She had massacred the prophets of the Lord and because of this God sent a drought across the land for several years and a severe famine spread.

After many years, God sent Elijah to speak to King Ahab to convince him and the children of Israel (who were practicing Baal worship) to repent. With signs and wonders from God, Elijah showed Ahab and the Israelites that there is only One True God and that Baal was just a statue. This led to Jezebel's fury when the people sided with Elijah, and she went searching to kill him. But God protected Elijah and raptured him to heaven alive. Afterwards, God sent a curse on the whole house of Ahab which led to his death, Jezebel's gruesome death, and the death of her seventy sons.

This example teaches that God does not and will not tolerate sin, idolatry and wickedness. Jezebel was a child of Satan, who practiced witchcraft — the interpretation of dreams, performed miracles, malicious magic and spell casting in the name of Baal. She corrupted the children of Israel and her husband, the king of Israel.

The Hebrew word “witchcraft” is *keseb* (Strong's #H3785) which means “magic, sorcery, witchcraft.” Christ related those who hold this “doctrine” of Jezebel to knowing the depths of Satan. In other words, those who practice witchcraft, magic or sorcery for idol worship know the deep things of the devil, because these are things associated with the devil.

Since the early 1800's there were forms of witchcraft and idolatry that had taken root in the Church. By the mid-20th century, witchcraft had branched to neo-paganism, especially the Wicca tradition and Shamanism following Gerald Gardner, who claimed a religious tradition of witchcraft with pre-Christian roots. Some of the forms of witchcraft include black magic, fortune tellers, reading tarot cards, crystal ball readers, palm readers, mind readers, conjuring the dead, sexual mysticism, spiritual healing and mediating, malicious magic to cause harm, human sacrifices, spell casting, magical herbs, etc.

Recently, witchcraft has begun to take on distinctly positive connotations especially among Wiccans and other Neo-pagans as the ritual element of their religious beliefs. Wicca is a witchcraft religion that is now practiced as an initiatory secret society. Some modern neo-pagan commentators consider the nature of witchcraft to be a Christian projection. Some of these practices include meditation, manipulation of energy, seeing auras, conducting séances, chanting mantras, healing rituals, divination-tarot cards, astrology (reading horoscopes), invoking spirits and fairies and conjuring the dead. The ceremonies and rituals practiced is a form of duo-theistic “universalism” considered today as “New Age Christian Universalism,” which is in actuality not Christian at all but more closely related to the synagogue of Satan.

Likewise, mysticism in Catholicism is understood as a unique experience of spiritual enlightenment. The ceremonies or rituals practiced in the Catholic Church are similar to those practiced in witchcraft, such as chanting prayers and songs, the sign of the cross, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the incense, the rosary, worshiping the dead and the spirituality of the saints. *None* of these things is accepted as a form of worship in the Word of God. These all are forms of idol worship and witchcraft. The fact is that literally thousands of ignorant Christians follow the traditions of the Catholic Church without even realizing that they are indulging in the deep things of Satan. And many other churches follow suit in their own mystical practices. For this reason, we must be diligent to adhere to the Scriptures, so that we are mindful of these hidden Satanic influences and can guard ourselves against them.

Following a command to repent from this, Christ gave an overcomer’s promise to those who refrain from these evil practices and keep His works until the end. To the faithful believer, Christ promised the greatest privilege of ruling and reigning in His kingdom and sharing in His royal splendor. He will share His sovereignty with Messianic partners who have proven their faithfulness in this life by doing the will of God to the end. This is the prize to which all believers should aspire! “*Power over the nations*” relates to ruling over the nations of the earth from the heavens. In addition to this, Christ promises to give the overcomer *the morning star*. In this passage, the morning star refers to the overcomer’s share in the glory of Christ. The word “star” in Scripture usually refers to either an actual “star,” “light,” “angels” or “Christ Himself.” In this case, it is the “glory or light” received from Christ.

5. *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,*

“These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.

Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes, shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:1-6)

The Church in Sardis was surrounded by the worship of Roman Caesar and of Artemis, the goddess of fertility. The Church was deeply involved in the affairs of their surrounding neighbors. They were eternally saved, but that was the extent of it. They were carnal believers walking according to the flesh and the world. Christ, therefore, made this statement: *“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”* These believers took no interest in the Word of God, and therefore had not matured in the knowledge of the Lord. Since their spirit was not allowing the Holy Spirit to work through them unto maturity, they were considered dead in spirit. And since they had not matured, they did not know about “the hope” or were watchful for the coming of the Lord and His kingdom. Therefore, Christ told them to *“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.”* Christ was exhorting them to mature in the Lord and to be watchful, to strengthen their works by allowing the Spirit to work through them. If their present works remained as is, they would not be found worthy before God and their dead works would not pass the test of fire.

Hebrews 5:13-6:2 provide strict warning of not maturing in the Word of the kingdom:

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of

righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age [mature], that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection [maturity], not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Rather than being “dead” to the Holy Spirit and to the Lord, and alive to the flesh and the world, a Christian ought to be dead to sin, to the flesh and to the world. This is the reason Christ died for us — to put away sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We need to wake up from our sleep and be alive in the Spirit, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us into the mature Christian that we are called to be. When we are mature in the Lord, He will lead us to do good works in preparing for that Day. But if we are dead in the Spirit, we are immature and our works are dead, and the life we lead, in sin and unfruitfulness, leads only to death.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.
(Romans 6:20-23)

Christ then said, “Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.” **(Revelation 3:3)**

Christ told the Church to remember when they first received the Word and heard with an open heart; and in eagerness, had the love and hope for Him. We must hold fast to this love and eagerness for the Lord, and be ever watchful for His return. Otherwise, He will come as a thief upon those who do not watch.

At this point, it will be too late for the non-overcomers to receive any grace or repentance. But Christ has said that for those who seek and learn

from Him, He will not come as a thief, for they will know what period of time He will return. They will expect Him and will not be surprised. They will be prepared for Christ and will have overcome. Christ tells us that even amongst a dark world where Satan rules, we can still overcome. In the end, there will be only a few amongst the millions of people who do overcome, but that should give us hope to faithfully endure. Christ mentioned that “even in Sardis” there were a “few” names who had not defiled their garments. These were the few who had not gone astray but continued to walk in righteousness. Christ said that *“they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”* **(Revelation 3:4, 5)**

The “white garments” represent *“the righteous acts of the saints”* **(Revelation 19:8)**, the same garment that Ruth had to put on to prepare herself for marrying Boaz, and it is the same wedding garment that Christians will have to put on to be the bride of Christ — by preparing beforehand with righteous acts.

If we prepare ourselves unto the end, Christ guarantees that our name will not be blotted out from the “Book of Life.” There are *many* “Books” that are opened during God’s judgments. This is not speaking of the “Lamb’s Book of Life” for spirit salvation (eternal life), for which one can never be blotted out, but this refers to the Book of Life for soul salvation, for the Messianic Era and one *can* be blotted out from this Book.

Christ promised the overcomers that not only will they walk with Him in white garments, but on that Day in the presence of the Father, He will confess their name before the Father and before His angels. During the present dispensation, Christ, in the flesh and in His Word, has declared the name of the Father to all believers **(John 17:26)**. But on that Day, Christ will declare our name to God the Father and God will honor us! **(John 12:26)**

6. *“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, “These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts and no one opens”: “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have*

kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:7-13)

John described Christ as “*He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.*” The key of David represents authority and the One who opens and shuts the door is Christ as the rightful “Son of David” (**Matthew 1:1**).

The Church in Philadelphia was commended for doing the will of God — for having little strength, for persevering in the faith, for being faithfully obedient to His word and for not denying His name. Christ said, “*I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it...*” Christ gave them an “open door” to be able to produce fruit for their ministry, a time in which there was worldwide missionary activity. And through patient endurance, they endured the trials in respect to their ministry of the truths surrounding Christ’s return. This was a time when God imparted much wisdom to missionary individuals and prophetic teachers, a time that lasted over one hundred years. But because of the destructive work of the leaven placed in the three measures of meal seen in **Matthew 13:33**, the missionary activity diminished rapidly. Christ mentions the responsible party, “*those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie...*” These were Christians (Jews by birth who were walking according to the flesh and speaking lies of hypocrisy). And to the Church in Philadelphia who kept the faith, Christ tells them what His judgment will be for these Jews: “*Indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved*

you.”

Christ gave the overcomers the assurance that they will be kept “...*from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*” This verse has led many to believe that Christ is referring to the future Tribulation, but this simply cannot be. If this was the case, then it would mean that the rapture of the saints is a selective event. This, in turn, would be contrary to what Scripture teaches, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, which is that *all* Christians will be removed at the same time, not just those who have been faithful.

So what does this mean? The promise of deliverance from the “hour of trial” is not referring to the Tribulation, but to the present dispensation. Given the previous context about those who were from the “synagogue of Satan” telling lies, we can understand that the Church was undergoing trials and temptations during their race of the faith.

Trials come in two forms — one, trials are allowed by God in connection with the maturing process and two, trials are executed by Satan who tempts individuals in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian’s life. In this case, with the Church of Philadelphia, Satan was tempting the Church in order to bring about defeat, and this is why God promised to protect them from the “hour of trial.” Since Pentecost, Christians have been in the “hour of trial” and will be until their rapture and resurrection. Christ endured trials and sufferings “for the joy that was set before Him” and, as our example, we also are to endure trials and sufferings for the joy that is set before us. The same joy that is set before Christ is set before us — to rule and reign in the kingdom of the heavens. This is our chance, in this life, to work out our own salvation so that we may be found worthy in the age to come. Satan knows that he has little time left before all Christians worldwide are raptured, so he is busy tempting and deceiving, doing as much harm as he can.

But for those who remain faithful during trials, God will protect them from the evil one. Christ exhorted them to “*Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown*” because “*Behold, I am coming quickly!*” This is why Christians should live every day in anticipation for the coming of the Lord. He will come so suddenly that for those who are not watching, He will come “as a thief in the night.” But for those who are watching, they will be prepared when the Lord returns.

Although the Church in Philadelphia was mature, faithful in all and lacking nothing, they had not yet finished the race. They still had to be strong and endure until the end, never to let their armor of God down so as to keep their crown, and not be removed from their position as co-heir with Christ. This is exactly why Paul continued to strive for a crown by continuing to discipline his body and bringing it into subjection, for he himself could be disqualified (**1 Corinthians 9:24**). It is this race for the crown that motivated Paul to “die daily,” or die to self, to fight and to follow his calling from God. He did not assume that he would automatically persevere to the end of the race. Paul recognized that the loss of this victor’s crown, this imperishable crown, was a very real possibility for him and for any believer; and therefore, he could never take his mission lightly. It was not until Paul’s approaching death that he knew he had finished the race and would receive the victor’s crown from God.

“Crowns” have to do with rulership, and all those found worthy at the Judgment seat of Christ will wear crowns on that Day. The crowns represent a position of power and authority, not just for a time, but forever. The overcomer’s promise from Christ is that He will make them *“a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go out no more.”*

The word “pillar” is used to describe the position that the overcoming Christian will have in the future temple. In the Messianic Era, Christ and His co-heirs will be the temple, as we see in **Hebrews 9:11** and **1 Peter 2:4**. It will not be a building made of dead stones built by hands such as was the earthly sanctuary, but a *spiritual* house made from living stones (Christians) built by Christ. Since a pillar denotes a strong and powerful part of a building, overcoming Christians will be placed in a position such as pillars in the temple. In other words, overcoming Christians will have a strong and powerful position as co-rulers with Christ in the kingdom.

The statement that *“he shall go out no more”* indicates a stable, secure and permanent position in God’s temple. Furthermore, Christ will inscribe upon the pillars (upon overcoming Christians) three names: *“I will write on him, 1) the name of My God and 2) the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. 3) And I will write on him My new name.”* A similar occurrence of inscribing or sealing God’s servants is seen in **Revelation 7:3**, when the angel of God prepares to seal the 144,000 Jews on their foreheads, as a sign of ownership and authority. During the Tribulation, Satan will deceive the

people using the same means as God, by inscribing on their foreheads his mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. His number is the number of a man: 666 (**Revelation 13:16**). But the True Name, the new name that we all aspire to have is that of Christ. We want to be sealed with the name of the Father, and the Son and the New Jerusalem forever.

7. *“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,*

“These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’— and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”
(Revelation 3:14-21)

The seventh Church, the Church in Laodicea, marks the final condition of the Church at the end of the dispensation, a completely leavened condition which resulted from the destructive work of the leaven placed in the three measures of meal at the beginning of the dispensation, described in **Matthew 13:33**. This corruption brought about the destruction of “the faith,” the Word of the kingdom. This is a picture of where the Church is today. Many Christians believe this Letter does not apply to saved individuals. Rather, they apply this judgment to unsaved individuals. But this Letter addressed to the Laodiceans *is* to the Church, as well as the other six Letters.

Christ described the Church as being *“lukewarm, and neither cold nor*

hot.” The Greek translation for “lukewarm” is *chliaros* [Strong’s #G5513] which means “tepid, lukewarm, lacking interest, lacking enthusiasm.” This is the only place in the Word of God that the word “lukewarm” is used. The works of the Church in Laodicea had this “lukewarm” attitude for Christ, mixed in with the cares of this present world system. They were saved with the indwelling Holy Spirit, but they cared nothing for their gift. They could take it or leave it.

Their interest and focus was for the things of this present age. It is exactly as we have seen with Israel in the wilderness, who were saved with the blood of the Passover lamb and were given the Manna from God. But the nation grew tired of this, longing instead for what they ate in Egypt (a type of the world) — being mindful of the things of men and of the world and not the things of Christ and of the kingdom. And we can see this whole matter again with regards to Lot’s wife and then again with Ruth’s sister-in-law, Orpah, both whose desires were for the flesh and the world, rather than for God.

The thoughts of these lukewarm Christians are: “*I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing,*” which means they feel rich in the things of this world — all of which is coming to nothing. Christ described them as “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*” This was their spiritual condition “in Christ.” They were poor in spirit, blind to the Truth and naked without their white garments, without righteous acts. Everything they think, say and do is similar to an unsaved individual and whether they realize it or not, they are following Satan, the god of this world. Christ will vomit them out of His mouth, being sick to His stomach because of what His people represent. They have totally forsaken Him, but He has not forsaken them. Despite the actions and attitude of the Church as a whole, Christ still extends an invitation for *individual* Christians “to repent.”

If we transform by the renewing of our mind, we are able to produce good works (righteous acts) — works that produce *gold, silver, precious stones*. These works will inevitably pass the test of fire at the Judgment seat of Christ. Only then will we be truly rich in the kingdom of the heavens, wearing white garments depicting our holiness, and our spirit filled with the truth and wisdom of God. This is why Christ rebukes and chastens in this life, because He is preparing Christians for the age to come. He is there waiting at the door and knocking. All we have to do is listen to His

voice (read His Word) and open the door (receive His Word). By digesting His Word, which is the Bread of Life, He will come in and dine with us. If we endure, we will have life in the age to come. Christ then promised this:

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”
(Revelation 3:21)

Overcoming then is with a view to the throne. And Christ states *“as I also overcame,”* coincides with *“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps”* must be heeded by any Christian aspiring to be an overcomer. Christ’s overcoming is associated with His sufferings during the time of His shame and rejection; and Scripture makes it very clear that overcoming for Christians is no different. We must follow the example that Christ left. And He left us the Holy Spirit and His Word to guide us. We must have the desire and the enthusiasm to seek Him and to want what He has purposed for us — to share the actual throne with Him. *Praise be to God forever!*

CHAPTER SIX

REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST — DECLARING THE END

The Book of **Revelation** is the Word of consummation — Christ declaring the end. It reveals the events of the end times; the divine plan of redemption for man brought to its fruition. The word “revelation” is the Greek translation “*apokalupsis*” (apocalypse) meaning “to disclose, reveal, unveil, uncover.” The revelation of Jesus Christ is an unveiling of end time events, to include the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a prophecy having to do with Christ’s return for the Church, with God’s dealings with the nation of Israel during the Tribulation, and with events leading to the close of this age. Then, it addresses the opening of the Messianic Era, the consummation of the Messianic Era and the beginning of the Eternal Ages.

The Book of **Revelation** is the uncovering of events from the Old Testament, to include the Book of **Daniel**. Daniel’s Seventy Weeks prophecy encompasses events during the last seven years of Man’s Day and deals primarily with God’s judgment and restoration upon the nation of Israel. In this respect, events surrounding the Church are dealt with first in the Book of **Revelation**. The removal and judgment of Christians to heaven will occur at the same time that God’s judgment upon the earth (Israel and the nations) will take place. God’s dealings with Israel were set aside shortly after the inception of the Church, at the beginning of this present dispensation. But after the Church is removed from the earth, God will deal with Israel once again unto repentance.

In the Book of **Revelation**, God chose the Apostle John to make known to His servants (Christians) what will take place at the end of this present dispensation, in order that they may realize their calling and be prepared for the Lord. John was called by God to go to a remote island, the isle of Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. And while he was there, God removed (raptured) him from the earth to heaven.

“I was in the Spirit in the Lord’s Day.” (Revelation 1:10)

By the power of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit, John was removed from his time and location to the end of this dispensation and placed in the future Day of the Lord in heaven. He was transported to a future time in order to document the things which he saw and heard, “*things which must shortly take place*” (**Revelation 1:1**). And it is clear to see that John was not dreaming or had visions, but was *physically* present in the future and was writing the events as he saw them transpire. We know this to be true because in **Revelation 10:4**, God commands John to stop writing while these end time events are taking place.

The “Lord’s Day” and the “Day of the Lord” carry the same meaning and refer to a *future* place and time in which Christ will occupy His position as Judge in the kingdom of heaven. When John was moved to the Lord’s Day, in heaven, the first thing he witnessed was Christ as Judge, “*clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band*” (**Revelation 1:13**).

The appearance and apparel of Christ identifies Him as *Judge*. Furthermore, from this point onward, in the Lord’s Day, the events that took place all had to do with judgment — first with the Church and then with the Jewish people and the Gentile nations. In comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can determine from Old Testament Scriptures that the context in which the prophets spoke surrounding “The Day of the Lord” was also in reference to judgment. Some of these Scriptures can be seen in **Zephaniah 1:2; Joel 2:1; Amos 5:16; Obadiah 15; Zechariah 14:1**.

And in keeping with the Day of the Lord, this is where the Book of **Revelation** places the Church when removed from the earth. *The Day of the Lord* refers to a time and place *in the heavens* and will begin when Christ returns for the Church, but the time and place *on earth will remain Man’s Day* until seven years later when Christ returns to the earth. The Day of the Lord will occur at the end of this present dispensation, immediately prior to the Tribulation on earth. John witnesses the Churches standing before Christ at His judgment seat in the heavens with God sitting on His throne, and the twenty-four elders (angels) casting their crowns before the Lord Jesus Christ. The seven Churches to which John was commanded to send a record were seven existing Churches in Asia during his day. These seven Churches will actually result in *all* Christians and will also reflect the overall condition of *all* Christians throughout

history at the end of the present dispensation, beginning with the Church in Ephesus who “*left their first love,*” and ending with the Church in Laodicea, the “*lukewarm*” Church. These seven Churches reflect the complete Church, i.e., *all* Christians. The number “*seven*” in Scripture denotes “*completeness for that which is in view.*” Therefore, John saw *all* individuals who are “*in Christ*” in the presence of the Lord together. They were all there at the same time (those who had been risen from the dead and those raptured alive; those who were faithful Christians and those who were unfaithful Christians) in order to be judged according to their works which they had previously performed during their life on earth.

These “works” will either be good or bad, depending on one’s faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God and His Word. **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three** reveal Christ’s judgment towards all Christians on the basis of these works, not on sin. Christ reveals this by saying, “*I know your works.*” God already judged sin in His Son, Jesus Christ, who took our sin and finished the work once and for all. Christ’s finished work (of sin) can never enter into any future judgment of men again; otherwise it would mean He would have to die on the cross all over again. Therefore, all future judgments of man, whether saved or unsaved, will be on the basis of *works*. Each Epistle in **Revelation** chapters **two** and **three** is structured exactly the same way: 1) *I know your works*, 2) *a call to repent*, and 3) *an overcomer’s promise*.

These Epistles were documented so that Christians could realize their calling and prepare. God’s calling is with a view to realizing an inheritance with Christ during the age to come. Christ provides the Church with a warning to repent because He is merciful and provides all Christians an opportunity to change their ways and choose the right path. The overcomer’s promise should exhort a believer *to be diligent to make their call and election sure*. “*Overcoming*” means “*to conquer, to gain a victory.*” To those who overcome, rewards are promised in the future heavenly kingdom. The overcomer will receive these rewards when the Millennial Kingdom begins, when Christ and His co-heirs ascend the throne together. To those who do not overcome, the consequence is loss of reward and loss of inheritance for the age to come.

With this in mind, it is evident that these seven Epistles, because of the

order in which they were presented — the deteriorating condition of the Churches, the reason for the call to repent, and the significance of Christ's recognition of "works" — point to the Judgment Seat of Christ. All seven Epistles have to do with the Messianic Era, the 1000 year reign of Christ. There is nothing in these Epistles that moves beyond this time; therefore they have nothing to do with the Eternal Ages, which are the ages beyond the Messianic Era.

Immediately following the Judgment seat of Christ, John in **Revelation** chapter **four** is again directed towards future events, through a *door standing open in heaven*.

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." Immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne set in heaven and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne.
(Revelation 4:1-3)

"*After these things*" refers to the immediate preceding events, which was the removal of all Christians and their judgment. (Something to note here and in the rest of the Scriptures is that each Book in the Word has no stopping points, but is ever-flowing in their paragraph structure. The Book of **Revelation** is no different, not only is it continuous in its structure, but also its events are written in chronological order. However, at times, the Word reverts back in order to reveal additional information concerning a particular subject.)

The Spirit then calls John to be a witness to further events and once again John was in the Spirit to witness events immediately after the Judgment seat of Christ. He describes the throne of God having a rainbow around the throne. The significance of this rainbow is first seen in **Genesis 9:13-15** when it appeared following the completion of God's judgment upon the earth with the Flood. As a result, we can determine that this same rainbow in **Revelation** chapter **four** signifies the completion of judgment of all Christians. We can also determine that the "*called out from the called*" or "*the bride*" has been chosen and the search for a bride for God's Son has

been completed. The rainbow is seen again in **Revelation 10:1**, on the head of a mighty angel who sounds the seventh trumpet, in connection with a past judgment of Israel and the nations.

Revelation chapter **four** then moves from the judgment of all Christians, to that which relates to crowns and regality.

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.
(Revelation 4:4, 5)

Surrounding the throne of God, John sees twenty-four thrones and twenty-four elders seated on these thrones wearing white robes and gold crowns. “Crowns” have to do with regality and up to this point, angels have ruled over the earth from the heavens since the beginning of creation. The twenty-four elders depict the two-thirds (24) of the angels who did not rebel with Satan against God. The fact that they are in God’s presence in heaven shows that they are not part of Satan’s fallen angels. In addition, the identity of these twenty-four elders or angels is shown by their number. When God initially created the government of the earth from the heavens, there were three sets of twelve, or thirty-six crowned angels ruling over the earth. The number “three” in Scripture is the number of divine perfection and the number “twelve” is the number of governmental perfection totaling thirty-six complete ruling angels. One-third of the angels fell with Satan during his rebellion against God. Therefore, these angels remaining with God who did not follow Satan would represent the twenty-four “elders” referenced here in **Revelation 4:4**. But of course, this number is a symbolic number, as the actual number is much greater — God has myriads of angels in the heavens.

John proceeds to describe what he sees and hears around the throne of God. There are “lightnings,” “thunderings,” and “voices” heard from the throne. Then, the four living creatures are identified. And before the throne, there were seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven “Spirits” of God or the Sevenfold Spirit (the sevenfold character of the Holy Spirit) mentioned in **Isaiah 11:2**. We can determine, although they

are not directly mentioned here, that the bride is present and standing as “lampstands” (the Church was first described in this way in **Revelation 1:12, 20**). The seven lamps or the seven Spirits of God are placed over the lampstands, i.e. the bride.

And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

*“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.. (**Revelation 4:6-10**)*

These four living creatures are very similar to the angels mentioned in **Ezekiel 1:1; 10:1**, whom Ezekiel saw before God’s throne and described in detail. In **Ezekiel 10:1**, these creatures were there to assist with the fiery judgment that was poured over Jerusalem and were there under the glory of the Lord as He departed from the temple. They seem to have separate roles from the twenty-four elders, functioning as the “eyes” of God in which they constantly work without rest to bring about the consummation of God’s plans and purposes, that which is associated with redemption. In **Revelation 4:9**, these four living creatures initiated the call for the twenty-four elders to fall down before the Father to worship Him and to relinquish their crowns before the throne. Again in **Revelation** chapter **six**, these four living creatures initiated the call to “*Come and see.*”

The actions taken by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne points to the transfer of rulership from the hands of angels to the hands of man, though man will not be exercising rulership or wearing these crowns at this time until *after* Christ returns to the earth and *after* He takes down Satan and relinquishes His crown and the crowns from the

fallen angels. A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler retain his crown until the one replacing him is present and ready to ascend the throne. For example, we see this in **1 and 2 Samuel** with Saul and David, forming a type of Satan and Christ. Saul, though disqualified, retained his crown and position as ruler until David arrived at the scene and was ready to ascend the throne. Then, Saul's crown was taken, given to David; and he, along with his faithful men, ascended the throne and ruled in the stead of Saul and those who had ruled with him. In the antitype, the same exact thing will occur. Satan, though disqualified, will retain his crown and continue to rule until Christ arrives at the scene and is ready to ascend the throne. Then, Satan's crown will be taken, given to Christ, and He, along with His faithful men (the Bride), will ascend the throne and rule in the stead of Satan and the angels who had ruled with him (**Revelation 19:11-20:6**).

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. (Hebrews 2:5)

Do you know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3)

These crowns that are now relinquished before the throne of God are with a view to man ruling in the kingdom, specifically those God will appoint who had previously been shown qualified at the Judgment seat of Christ. But these relinquished crowns will not be worn until *after* Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, after He overthrows Gentile world power, after He defeats Satan and his angels, and after He takes their crowns by force. Only then will Christ be in possession of all the crowns, the complete number of divine perfection of the earth's government, in which He and His bride will wear as they inherit the throne and rule over the earth.

Revelation chapter **five** begins with the opening of the seven-sealed scroll (title deed to the earth) containing the judgments of the earth and identifying the One found worthy to break the seven seals of the scroll. And the One found worthy to redeem the earth (redeem the inheritance) is the Lamb of God, Jesus the Christ.

The judgments must take place in order for the redemption of the

inheritance (the earth) to be passed on to Christ's possession and be under His rule. Presently, it is under Satan's possession and rule until he is put down. The "Lamb of God" will become the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," and with His great power, He will defeat the devil and his angels along with the Gentile nations.

...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:20-23)

The redemption that will take place will be a dual redemption, consisting of man and the earth. Man's redemption was brought about through Christ's finished work at Calvary, and the earth's redemption will be brought about through Christ's work of breaking the seals that He is seen taking from His Father's right hand. Scrolls in the Old Testament had to do with title deeds to sections of land and contained the terms of redemption for those sections. Christ is seen purchasing the "field" (the earth) having paid the price that allowed Him to open the scroll. This is seen in the Parable of the Hidden Treasure:

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure (Israel) hidden in a field (the earth), which a man (Christ) found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field (the earth). (Matthew 13:44)

"The field is the world..." (Matthew 13:38)

Part of this redemptive process involves redeeming the bride as well, which Christ had also previously purchased with His own blood. And the redemption of the bride, His purchased possession, will emanate out of determinations at His judgment seat. Those prepared and found worthy Christ will redeem as His bride in marriage.

...having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the

purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13)

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Revelation 19:7)

Following John’s eyewitness of God’s dealings with the Church in heaven and the relinquishing of the crowns by the angels, he then witnesses God’s dealings with Israel on earth.

Matters turn to the opening of the seven sealed scroll, which is the redemption of the inheritance (of the earth). Matters now turn to Israel and their restoration. The elders (angels) are pictured singing a song, which are the prayers of the saints. The expression, “*kings and priests*,” in **Revelation 5:10** is best translated a “kingdom of priests.” This expression has been used in **Exodus 19:6** relative to Israel and used again in **1 Peter 2:9** relative to Christians. This expression used in **Revelation 5:10** is the position which Israel will occupy yet future when the theocracy has been restored. And Christians will occupy the same position from a *heavenly* realm under Christ.

The opening of the sixth seal in **Revelation** chapter **six** marks the commencement of the Tribulation upon the earth. These judgments will last a period of seven years and correspond to Daniel’s Seventieth Week. During this period, Israel will be judged on earth and will be brought to a place of repentance to determine the wife of God. Likewise, the Church will be judged in heaven to determine the bride of Christ. Both judgments will transpire at the same time. And both, Israel and the Church, through the process of judgment, will be automatically married at the completion of the seven year Tribulation, the completion of the redemption of the inheritance. This is seen in the Old Testament with Ruth being revealed as the bride of Boaz at his threshing floor and then automatically becoming his wife the moment Boaz redeemed the inheritance (**Ruth 3, 4**).

The judgments recorded in **Revelation** chapters **six** through **nineteen** concerns the complete judgments on the earth for the purpose of bringing Israel to a place of repentance. It is considered the “*time of Jacob’s trouble*” and will be the most dreadful of all times, a severity unparalleled in man’s 6,000 year history.

And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time... (Daniel 12:1a)

The Israeli nation, as it exists in the Middle East today, will not exist during the last half of the Tribulation (**Matthew 24:15-22; Revelation 11:2**). The current Middle East situation will, during this time, be so overturned that “*unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened*” (**Matthew 24:22**). God will allow this to occur for a revealed purpose – to restore man back to the position for which he was originally created. And because the whole matter lies in God’s sovereign control, *man cannot do anything about the matter*.

These judgments consist of: 1) the seven seals 2) the seven trumpets and 3) the seven bowls. Note that all of these judgments occur in chronological order, but not necessarily in separate occurrences, as some overlap with each other.

The breaking of the first four seals in **Revelation** chapter **six** summarizes the revealing and work of the Antichrist and his rule, from the beginning of the Tribulation until the end. The Book of **Daniel** references additional material surrounding the Tribulation, Antichrist and Israel; and can be used as a companion book when studying the Book of **Revelation**. God completes His dealings with Israel within the scope of time covered by Daniel’s Seventy-Weeks Prophecy:

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes. Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity (peace). (Daniel 8:23, 25)

The last three seals of the seven-sealed scroll provide a complete detailed view of the last seven years of Man’s Day. The seventh and final seal will produce *silence in heaven for about half an hour (Revelation 8:1)*. Judgments under the seventh seal will bring the whole matter to a close. Within these seven seals or seven judgments, the trumpet and the bowl judgments will provide further commentary as to its completion.

Since the first four seals clearly deal with the Antichrist during the Tribulation, the rider in the four different horses mentioned cannot be anyone else except the Antichrist in all four horses. Each time the Antichrist rides forth a certain type horse, it depicts his actions against the nation of Israel. And as he continues to ride the following horses at different times, the conditions that arise are a result of his previous actions. The fourth horse or judgment is the inevitable consequence of the first three. They are the same means that God previously used to bring the nation of Israel to repentance, as we see in **1 Kings 8:33-39; 1 Chronicles 21:12**, except this time in a much more severe manner.

The first seal is a reference to the actions of the Antichrist when he first arises at the beginning of the Tribulation.

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1, 2)

The Antichrist is seen wearing a crown, a *stephanos* crown [victor's crown]. This leader's intentions are to dominate the world as he goes forth *conquering and to conquer*. Commentators make the mistake of stating that this rider is Christ because He is riding on a white horse and is wearing a crown. But the symbol of the white horse and the crown simply refer to the present "prince of this world" and the means in which he will first attack Israel. The fact that this leader is holding a bow with no arrow indicates that at this time he is not conquering by force, but rather by other means. In comparing Scripture with Scripture, we have presented in **Daniel 11:22** reference being made of the Antichrist as "*the prince of the covenant*" who can only be "*the prince who is to come* from **Daniel 9:26**. And the means in which he will dominate the world will be as such:

And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. (Daniel 11:21)

He will devise his plans through deception as his means of gaining power and riches. He will obtain this position of power — *peaceably, and by intrigue*. The word "intrigue" also means "flatteries" which is the Hebrew

translation (Strong's #H2519) "*halaqlaqqā*" meaning "to be smooth; slippery; flattery in a scheming manner." With his flattering appearance and speech, Antichrist will deceive many throughout the world. He will appear as a man of peace who has the answers for the long going battle in the Middle East; between Israel and its surrounding enemies. This will allow him to make a covenant with many in Israel. For three and one-half years the Antichrist will continue his deceitfulness, his means of conquering, until "*the middle of the week*" arrives and he breaks his covenant with the holy people.

The he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
(Daniel 9:27)

It is evident from Daniel's prophecy that part of the covenant Antichrist will make with Israel will be to allow the rebuilding of the Temple on the Temple Mount. The Jews will restore the Mosaic priesthood and sacrifices in the new Temple. As impossible as it may seem today to rebuild the Temple on the Temple Mount where the Moslem mosque currently stands, the Antichrist will make it possible at the beginning of the Tribulation. But then, in the middle of the Tribulation, after three and one-half years, the Antichrist will break the covenant with Israel and things will begin to change rapidly.

The breaking of the covenant by the Antichrist opens **the second seal** to the seven-sealed scroll in **Revelation 6:3, 4**:

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another, and there was given to him a great sword.

Antichrist will break the covenant by bringing "*an end to sacrifice and offering.*" He will enter the Temple, damage it, and commit an abomination of desolation against the living God (**Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11**). He will sit *in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**). He will also erect a statue of the beast in Babylon for all to worship. And immediately after this occurs, the Jewish people in Judea are told to run for their lives, to flee to the mountains where God has

prepared a safe haven for them.

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” (Matthew 24:15-22)

At this time, the Antichrist and his armed forces will destroy both the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (**Daniel 9:26**). The Jews who do not escape to the mountains will be *“led away captive into all nations”* (**Luke 21:24a**). And the nation of Israel will once again cease to exist. *“And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* (**Luke 21:24b**)

The Jewish people will once again be led by the Gentile nations until Christ returns, destroys the nations, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet. This is the commencement of the “Great Tribulation,” in which the “man in the red horse” shall reveal his true identity to all the world and *He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power* (**Daniel 11:16b**). This man (Antichrist) will seek to slay the Jewish people, along with destroying Jerusalem and the Temple and dividing the land. And he will have the support of the Gentile nations surrounding him, who will be under his sway and control. **Daniel 11:36-39** describes his character in this way:

Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire for women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god, which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land [Israel] for gain.

We can see the similarity here between Antichrist's character and that of Satan; and this should be expected, as Antichrist will be the "seed" of Satan, his literal son. Both exalt themselves to be higher than God the Father. The Antichrist shall acknowledge himself to be God and cause all to worship him or be killed. Those who do worship him, either Jews or Gentiles, will be causing their own destruction, as noted in **Revelation 14:9-11**:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

The Antichrist will continue full force with his destructive ways against the Jewish people, and the world will quickly collapse into hatred, violence, death and ruins. This opens **the third seal**, *the rider now on a black horse*:

"When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5, 6)

Following much war and killing, the aftermath is worldwide "famine,"

depicted by the black horse. The rider is seen with a pair of scales in his hand, showing his control over the value of money. He controls the price for a specified amount of food and, during this time, it will cost a day's wage for a minimal amount. The fight for survival will be apparent, as the quality of life will be reduced to the barest of necessities. The expression "*do not harm the oil and the wine,*" refers to the wealthy, those able to spend far more than a day's wage for food. They will be able to buy from the one who controls the food, and thereby giving him more power. The Antichrist takes control of the money, the food and the people as "*he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*" (**Revelation 13:16, 17**)

Following these horrific events, what will become of mankind and the earth? Who will be able to stand? This is seen with **the fourth seal** when the Antichrist rides forth on a pale horse.

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. (**Revelation 6:7, 8**)

This fourth judgment is the inevitable consequence of the first three. Because of sword, famine and pestilence, one-fourth of the population of the earth will die during this time; two-thirds of the Jewish people will be killed. Thus, it is fitting that the rider on the pale horse is given the name "*Death*" with "*Hades*" following to claim those who have died. Death and pestilence will cover every nation totaling *over* a billion people, and those who remain alive will not be able to bear it.

When the Jews have been completely shattered by the Antichrist and the Gentile nations (God will place the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles because of their disobedience: *because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword.* **Ezekiel 39:23**), they will call upon Him and He will then have mercy on them and restore them.

They will call on My name, and I will answer them. (**Zechariah**

13:9c)

“...it shall be for a time, times, and half a time [three and one-half years]; and when the power of the holy people [Israel] has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.”

(Daniel 12:7c)

Those who sided with the Antichrist against the Jews will perish during this time, which was promised by God in His covenant to Abraham.

I will curse him who curses you. **(Genesis 12:3)**

For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment...For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance. **(Isaiah 34:5, 8)**

Immediately following this widespread death, **the fifth seal** opens revealing *souls under the altar*. This altar is a description of the brazen altar in the Temple of God; the place where the sacrifice occurred and the blood of the sacrifice poured beneath the altar. These souls under the altar are described as *those who had been slain for the Word of God and for the testimony that they held* **(Revelation 6:9c)**. Taking into consideration that this scene resulted from that which previously transpired with the first four seals, these “souls” would have to come out of the Great Tribulation.

We see further commentary on this in **Revelation** chapter **seven**, describing these souls as *“a great multitude that no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands...these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* **(Revelation 7:9-14)**

These “souls” were martyrs; those saved from the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists who had been slain for their faith in God during the Great Tribulation.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell

on the earth?” Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Revelation 6:10, 11)

Note that the souls under the altar were provided with “white robes” to wear, indicating they were found worthy to enter the kingdom. These martyrs had been killed for the Word of God and for not wearing the mark of the beast during the Great Tribulation. They were crying out to the Lord asking how long He would allow the Tribulation on earth to continue. And the Lord told them to rest a while longer for there were still others like them, since He referred to them as “*their fellow servants and their brethren*” who were yet to be killed as they were, so that He would then save them. God knows the perfect set time in which His plans and purposes will be accomplished. Nothing will happen until God’s set time arrives and when it does, then we can be rest assured that it will be done. We are to “wait” upon the Lord as we see in **Psalms 27:14**:

Wait on the Lord Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!

After these things have taken their course, and the Holy people have been shattered; after much death, famine and pestilence, and at the time when the Jewish people cry out to the Lord unto repentance, then the Lord will hear them and this will mark in proximity to the coming of the Son of Man.

The return of the Lord is revealed in the opening of **the sixth seal**:

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. (Revelation 6:12, 13)

We see a parallel to this Scripture in **Matthew 24:29, 30a** concerning the coming of the Son of Man:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall

from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven..."

There is a connection in these verses that moves chronologically to the close of the Great Tribulation. Both indicate that the signs of His coming seem to be marked by monumental cosmic disturbances, such as great earthquakes, the sun being darkened and the moon dark as blood. But actually, these signs are *metaphors* used to depict the outpouring of God's wrath by allowing the Antichrist to do his damage, that which is seen within the first four seals and then the signs of the Lord Jesus Christ's return. The prophets from the Old Testament made this same distinct indication that the coming of the Lord will be signified by the deterioration of conditions on earth which will reach its peak and will include the complete collapse of the governments of the earth. The darkness of the sun, moon and stars signifies the complete breakdown of Gentile world power, and that which follows is its complete destruction by the Lord Jesus Christ and His army of angels.

The Lord gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; Who can endure it? (Joel 2:10-11)

Who will be able to endure the sufferings of the Tribulation and who will be able to live through it? Not many. This is why the Lord says,

"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."
(**Matthew 24:22**)

A similar question is given when the sixth seal is opened:

For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand? (Revelation 6:17)

In **Revelation 16:17a-19a, 20**, when the seventh bowl is poured out bringing about the completion of God's judgments upon the world, we again see the use of metaphors, signifying the complete destruction of Gentile world power that takes place on the earth:

"It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell...then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

A parallel Scripture can be seen in **Revelation 7:14**:

Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

Everyone will have great fear when they see these disasters, i.e., the collapse of the governments. They will run and hide in caves hoping they can hide from the face of the Lord. **Revelation 6:15, 16** reveals who these individuals are:

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

Revelation chapter **seven** begins with the sealing of the 144,000 Jews (12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel) who will be *God's witnesses to the nations*. (**Isaiah 43:1-21; 61:6**) The final evidence of the last half of the Tribulation will be the worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom by these 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
(Matthew 24:14)

This scene takes place in the middle of the Tribulation, when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and before the judgments (the seals) are unleashed. God commands the angels to seal these 144,000 Jews on their foreheads so that no harm may come to them.

"Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed."
(Revelation 7:3a, 4)

In **Revelation 9:4**, we see that these 144,000 Jews were protected from the fifth trumpet, the locusts from the bottomless pit.

They [locusts] were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

A similar occurrence took place in **Ezekiel 9:4**, when God placed judgment upon the Jewish people for their harlotry and idolatry against the Lord, and for committing these abominations in the Temple of God. Before He cast bloodshed upon the unrighteous Jews and departed from the Temple, He commanded an angel to go and seal the righteous Jews on their foreheads throughout the city of Jerusalem.

And the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

But for those who did not have the mark, God commanded this:

*To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out! And they went out and killed in the city. (**Ezekiel 9:5-7**)*

We can picture here the seriousness of God's judgment upon those who betray Him, as it is written, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (**Hebrews 10:31**)*.

These seals or marks on the witnesses' foreheads are signs of ownership or authority. In **Revelation 3:12c**, Christ promises the faithful Church in Philadelphia that if they overcome He *will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.* This mark given by Christ to the overcomers signifies ownership and also implies a special intimacy, as the overcomer is associated with Christ as co-ruler throughout the Millennium. And Satan, as the great deceiver,

imitates God in this manner in that he (Antichrist) also commands all to receive the mark on their foreheads, claiming their ownership, in order to have power over the entire world. The 144,000 Jews will receive God's mark on their foreheads and will do that which God had initially called on the nation of Israel to accomplish. They will carry God's message of the kingdom over a period of three and one-half years and will convert many, who in turn will be God's witnesses to the Gentile nations (Gentiles who survived and remained on the earth) during the Messianic Era. These 144,000 Jews will be the "*first fruits*" (of the entire nation) *to God and to the Lamb* because they will do that which God called the nation of Israel into existence to accomplish. They are without deceit and fault with regard to their testimony for Christ and will be *God's witnesses to the nations* (**Isaiah 43:1, 9-12**). Therefore, God will gather them together first and *these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes* (**Revelation 14:4**).

And because a multitude will be converted as a result of the ministry of these 144,000 witnesses, they will also be killed for the Word of God and for their testimony. We see a reference to these martyrs, these "souls under the altar" when the fifth seal is broken, and now referenced again in **Revelation 7:9, 10, 14a**:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

These martyrs will be found worthy to enter the kingdom and rule and reign with Christ:

*Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (**Revelation 20:4c**)*

The breaking of **the seventh seal** in **Revelation 8:1** will mark Christ's completion of the redemption of the inheritance. Time in relation to

Man's Day will have run its course and Christ's work will be completed. This is why *there was silence in heaven for about half an hour*. The seventh seal also introduces the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. The sounding of the seven trumpets forms the judgments revealed when the seventh seal on the scroll is broken. These are the judgments under the seventh seal, and the sounding of these seven trumpets brings to pass *all* of the judgments. It is clear to see when one takes a look at the events of the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl that they both parallel each other. The seventh trumpet ends with Christ's finished work and the kingdom proclaimed:

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!
(Revelation 11:15)

The seventh bowl also ends with Christ's finished work of the redemption of the inheritance:

...and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" **(Revelation 16:17)**

The seven bowls parallel the seven trumpets. They form further descriptions of the same judgments. They also reveal the second coming of Christ, the taking down of Gentile governments and the kingdom of the Antichrist, along with the False Prophet.

In comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can see that God used similar plagues in the Exodus for Egypt (a type of the world). Beginning in **Exodus 7:14**, God placed ten plagues on Egypt, using the rod of God and of "Aaron," displaying God's power for the salvation of the Jewish people. We can see that in John's gospel, John used "signs" that pertained to the end of this age and now again in Revelation, we see that God "signified" (through the use of "signs") to John the revelation of Jesus Christ. These "signs" in the Book of **Revelation** are presented in "metaphors" to give a more intense meaning and picture to that which God wanted to portray to His people. Each trumpet and each bowl in **Revelation 8, 9, 15, 16** are connected; and when compared to the events of the sixth seal (showing the complete collapse of the governments of the earth) we then have a complete word-picture of the end of the Tribulation and of Man's Day.

The First Trumpet presents *hail and fire...mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up (Revelation 8:7).*

A parallel to the First Trumpet, providing additional commentary, is **The First Bowl** poured upon the earth, *and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image (Revelation 16:2).*

Hail, fire, blood, and loathsome sores thrown to the earth from heaven refer to judgment upon “*men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*” The hail and fire, mingled with blood on a third of the trees and all of the green grass causing it to burn up is a reference to severe judgment to those in power under the Antichrist [“trees” in Scripture means “national powers;” as seen in **Luke 21:29**] and to rich merchants worldwide [“grass” in Scripture means “all flesh;” as seen in **1 Peter 1:24**; “green grass” means those who are rich or prosperous].

In summary, the picture portrayed here is the collapse of one-third of national powers and all rich merchants who were under the sway of the Antichrist. God’s judgment upon them will be to bring their kingdoms down and to reduce them to nothing; a complete desolation of the kingdom of men. This will result in a foul and loathsome soreness in the hearts of men. They will be in deep despair as they see their kingdom and their riches collapsing all around them. A further description of this is seen in the Old Testament, when Babylon was brought down to nothing. The new “Babylon” will be no different, as noted in **Revelation 18:2a, 3, 7, 8**:

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every “foul spirit.” For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

Foul and loathsome sores” will be “sores of the heart,” a painful wound of the heart and mind; a mental suffering filled with anguish and despair. Yet, this mental suffering will be nothing compared to the suffering they will endure in the age to come when they will be tormented day and night in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

The Second Trumpet sounded: *And “something like” a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed (Revelation 8:8).*

The Second Bowl was poured: *on the sea, and it became blood “as of a dead man;” and every living creature in the sea died (Revelation 16:3).*

A *mountain* in Scripture usually refers to a “kingdom” (**Isaiah 2:3; Revelation 21:10**). *Fire* means “judgment” and the *sea*, as referenced here, is used to refer to “the Gentiles, Gentile nations, or Gentile kingdoms.” This mountain is referred to as a “*great mountain*,” therefore we can conclude that it is speaking of the kingdom of the Antichrist. *Burning with fire* would have to do with God’s judgment upon this kingdom. And *cast into the sea* would refer to the judgment of the Antichrist’s kingdom being cast into the Gentile nations. In other words, this verse could be translated to say this: *The kingdom of the Antichrist burning with God’s judgment was thrown into the Gentile nations.*

The result of the kingdom of the Antichrist burning with God’s judgment and cast into the Gentile nations is seen with one-third of the Gentile nations (kingdoms; governments) dead, one-third of the living creatures in the Gentile nations dead (The Greek translation for “creature” is *ktisma* meaning “an original formation, i.e., a product or created thing — building, creation, creature, ordinance, product), and a third of the ships (ships used to transport goods from one place to another: trade & commerce) destroyed. All of these things have to do with the governments of the earth, to include its trade and commerce.

The Second Bowl is pictured in the exact same way. The second bowl was poured out on the sea (Gentile nations). The Gentile nations *became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.*

In this judgment, instead of one third of the government, trade and

commerce dead, it is *all* dead, thereby bringing this matter to its completion. Both the sounding of the second trumpet and the pouring of the second bowl show exactly the same things as seen when the six seal was broken, with detail being added to it. Together, they form a more detailed description of the complete collapse of the kingdom of the Antichrist, to include the Gentile governments, its trade and commerce.

The Third Trumpet deals with the rivers and springs of water. *And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter (Revelation 8:10a, 11).*

The Third Bowl also deals with the rivers and springs of water: *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due. (Revelation 16:4-6)*

“Stars” in Scripture refer mostly to angels (**Revelation 1:20**), and sometimes to men (**Revelation 12:1**) in positions of authority. In **Revelation 8:10**, the “great” star possibly denotes a mighty angel who was given the power to place judgment (“*burning like a torch*”). “Waters” are used in Scripture to indicate “*peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues*” (**Revelation 17:15**). Therefore, the waters or multitudes of people who worshiped the beast and who killed the saints and prophets “became blood,” that is, they experienced physical death. God avenged them for what they did to the martyrs, remembering when they cried out in the fifth seal:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10)

With the third trumpet, God avenged the people with pain and suffering before they died, having gone through the collapse of the kingdom and the world before their eyes, and their possessions destroyed, bringing their mental state to complete anguish. Then, with the same measure they used

on the saints and prophets, God used on them — physical torture and death.

The Fourth Trumpet: *Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night (Revelation 8:12).*

The Fourth Bowl was poured out *on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory (Revelation 16:8a, 9).*

The sun, moon and stars are used to reference the whole of the governing powers in the kingdom of the Antichrist. Where light and life once existed, now has been replaced with darkness and death. The three metaphors that represent these governing powers are as follows:

- 1) The Sun—representing the Antichrist, 2) the Moon—representing the False Prophet, and 3) the Stars—representing the fallen angels.

The fourth bowl then depicts the fallen condition of the governments under these three dark powers. It is a word-picture of the collapse of the governments across the world under the rule of the Antichrist, and the cause of intense anguish among the people under his rule. The people blaspheme God, the One in complete control of the situation, rather than repenting. The phrase “scorched by great heat from the sun” is metaphorical, referring to their pain and suffering as the whole world around them is collapsing.

When the fifth angel sounded **the Fifth Trumpet:** *And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit (Revelation 9:1, 2).*

The Fifth Bowl was poured out *on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds (Revelation 16:10, 11).*

The fifth trumpet and fifth bowl reflects a continuation of the previous fourth judgment, showing that the kingdom of the Antichrist has turned to darkness, bringing the kingdom into its final form immediately before it is completely destroyed by Christ at His second coming. An angel poured out the fifth bowl *on the throne of the beast and his kingdom became full of darkness (Revelation 16:10)*. And because of this, those in the kingdom *gnawed their tongues because of the pain and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds (Revelation 16:10c, 11)*. Both the fifth trumpet and the fifth bowl judgment are connected, having to do with darkness throughout the kingdom of the beast.

The fifth trumpet presents a “star” fallen from heaven to the earth. This star was a “fallen angel” whom God allowed to possess the key and to open the “bottomless pit” (abyss; underworld). Immediately following, thick smoke appeared which covered the sun and produced darkness. Then, locusts are seen coming out of the smoke.

Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lion’s teeth. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. (Revelation 9:3-11)

These locusts coming out of the smoke had tails like scorpions, and they were given power to torment the earth-dwellers for five months, but not to

kill them; although they will seek death and not find it. They were told not to harm *the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Revelation 9:4)*. In other words, the locusts were commanded not to harm anyone, whether they were a national power or merchants or any other person that had the seal of God on their foreheads. They were sent to harm only those who had the mark of the beast. These locusts have as *king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon (Revelation 9:11)*. Both names mean “Destroyer.” This angel, who has the key to the bottomless pit and is king over the demons and fallen angels, is Satan.

The “bottomless pit” or “abyss” is referred to in Scripture as a place of demons, the place where some of the fallen angels have been bound and the place where Satan will be bound in the age to come for one thousand years (**Luke 8:30-33; Revelation 20:1**). This place is also known as “hell/tartaros”—the deepest abyss of Hades (Strong’s #G5020). We can determine then that these locusts being released from the bottomless pit can only refer to “demons” and could also be the fallen angels described in **2 Peter 2:4**.

Therefore, the final judgment of the earth-dwellers, those who are in the kingdom of the Antichrist who do not have the seal of God, will be an intense demonic attack. The scene is that of a kingdom in utter collapse, and those in the kingdom being tormented by demons. They will hope for death, but death will not come upon them. Those in the kingdom are seen gnawing their tongues for pain and blaspheming “*the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores.*” This is the end result of Gentile world power under the Antichrist immediately before it is destroyed by Christ. At this point in time, after the fifth seal is broken and following the fifth trumpet and the fifth bowl, the kingdom of the Antichrist along with the Gentile nations throughout the entire world is seen in chaos, bringing about the near end of the Tribulation. The final two trumpets and the pouring out of the final two bowls are the signs of the Lord’s return, bringing matters to a complete end.

When the **Sixth Trumpet** sounded, a voice is heard from the throne of God saying, “*Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.*” *So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now*

the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million...and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed- by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. (Revelation 9:14-16, 17, 18)

The angel poured out the **Sixth Bowl** on the great river Euphrates, *and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan], out of the mouth of the beast [Antichrist], and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon [the Mount of Megiddo]. (Revelation 16:12b-16)*

The angel sounding the sixth trumpet is commanded to loose four angels that were "bound" at the great river Euphrates. The number "four" of these four angels has to do with the earth, showing the length of their mission, referring to the four corners of the earth. These angels are the same angels as that of the "three demonic spirits" seen when the sixth bowl is poured out. The number "three" in Scripture is the number of divine perfection. In this particular case, the number has to do with a *counterfeit* divine perfection. Satan, who seeks to imitate God, creates his own unholy trinity: the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. This is why "three unclean spirits" is used. However, just as the actual number of God's angels is much greater than twenty-four elders, so also the actual number of these three fallen angels or demonic spirits is much greater. The fact that these fallen angels were "bound" indicates they could be the angels referred to in **Genesis 6:1; 2 Peter 2:4** that fell during Jared's day, before the Flood, and were sent to Tartaros bound in chains.

The purpose of drying up the Euphrates River where the demonic spirits were bound was so *that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared (Revelation 16:12c)*. Although the Euphrates River is the largest river in the Middle East, it is apparent that this river is being used as a metaphor here. Armies of today would not be blocked by a river or a drying up of a river, as their means of travel and warfare are highly

sophisticated. Rather, this metaphor implies that these fallen angels were sent to remove any hindrance that would prevent the Gentile armies worldwide from moving into the Middle East. The Gentile armies are presented as horsemen wearing breastplates of fire, brimstone and smoke; and the horses they ride having heads as lions, with fire, smoke and brimstone as well. Numerous metaphors are being used. The description of the Gentile armies is a reference to the modern day methods of war, of weapons, and of travel — that which will result in the most horrific, bloodshed war ever to take place since the history of man.

The armies being led by the beast (Antichrist) and Satan will form a huge army numbering over 200 million from all over the world. They will be led into Jerusalem, specifically to a particular place referred to as “Armageddon,” meaning “Mount of Megiddo.” This event will be Satan’s final attempt to destroy the Christ and His people. The sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl then is a picture of the armies of the world under the Antichrist, already in complete collapse, being gathered to the Middle East, to the land of Israel. And they are being gathered by demonic spirits, in order to attempt to destroy the converted Jews and their King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ will return during this time, right before the armies are gathered to the Middle East, to convert the Jews and bring them back to their land (since they are scattered amongst the Gentile nations). Then, God will allow Satan to effect the gathering of the armies of the earth in order that Christ, beginning His march into battle from the Mount of Olives, will go forth and destroy these armies and deliver His people.

The Mount of Megiddo in **Revelation 16:16** encompasses the entire surrounding area, the valley of Megiddo, located some fifty miles north of Jerusalem, in order to house such a vast worldwide army. It is no wonder that it is referenced as the “*great day of God Almighty.*” The bloodshed from this battle will run up to 200 miles in length. And it is from Jerusalem that the Lord Jesus Christ will go forth as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* to tread the winepress.

The Seventh Trumpet sounded: *And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!...Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail”* (**Revelation 11:15, 19**).

The Seventh Bowl was poured out *into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"* And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great (**Revelation 16:17-21**).

When the seventh trumpet has sounded and the seventh bowl has been poured out, Man's Day will be brought to an end; the mystery of God brought to completion. We see this in (**Revelation 11:15c, d**):

"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever!"

Then again with the Seventh Bowl:

"It is done!" (**Revelation 16:17a**)

When both of these announcements are made, there will be *"lightnings, noises, thunderings, and a mighty earthquake [a mighty shaking], and great hail.* God's final judgment will have fallen upon the kingdom of Babylon [a detailed description of God's judgment upon Babylon is seen in Chapters **eighteen** through **nineteen** in the Book of **Revelation**]. Great hail will fall from heaven, with each stone weighing about 75 pounds [a talent], which would be phenomenally destructive. A great shaking [earthquake] unlike anything seen since man was created would also bring about massive destruction worldwide. The judgment of Israel and the Gentile nations will be finished. The full revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will be made known. Israel will have been brought to the place of repentance, Christ will have fully redeemed the inheritance, and the kingdom will be transferred to Him. This will open the Messianic Era, the one thousand year reign of Christ!

Revelation chapter **ten** concerns the end of judgment upon Israel and the nations. The end result of the seven seals being broken and everything

being brought to pass is represented by a “mighty angel” — with a rainbow on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire (**Revelation 10:1**) — holding a little book, which is the seven-sealed scroll now opened in his hand. The mighty angel, holding the opened scroll, is sent by God to make the proclamation that “*when the seventh angel is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished*” (**Revelation 10:7**). He comes down from heaven and places “*his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land*” showing complete dominance over the earth. The rainbow on his head is in connection with a past judgment of Israel and the nations, just as the rainbow seen in God’s throne in chapter four was in connection with a past judgment of Christians. The rainbow in both instances depicts the end of judgment. Then the mighty angel cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars, seven thunders uttered their voices, (the fulfillment of the seven judgments), in which John was commanded not to write them down for the time had not yet come. This was also commanded to Daniel, when the angel said, “*Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end*” (**Daniel 12:9**).

When the seventh angel has sounded, then *the mystery of God will be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets*. John was commanded to take the little book [scroll] out of the angel’s hand and eat it. The little book contained words of judgment upon Israel because of their unrepentant state, and it made John’s stomach bitter. But in the end, when the nation does finally repent, it will taste *as sweet as honey in your mouth*. We see a connection in **Ezekiel 2:8-3:4**, where a scroll is also taken and eaten, with sweetness resulting. Both of these incidents have to do with Israel being brought to the place of repentance. Therefore, events in the Books of **Revelation** and **Ezekiel** are structured in the same way, both prophesying that which is yet to come concerning Israel’s judgment and restoration.

Revelation chapter **eleven** reverts back to the beginning of the Tribulation and opens with an angel commanding John to measure the temple. This is the temple that will be constructed by the Jews during the first year of the Tribulation. During this period of time, God will send two witnesses from heaven down to earth to carry the message of salvation to the Jewish people in Jerusalem. Their ministry will be for exactly 1,260 days or the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation. Afterwards, the Gentiles *will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months*, the last three and

one-half years, during which the daily sacrifices will be taken away and the temple destroyed.

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.
(Revelation 11:3)

The ministry of these two witnesses will be for an exact period of time, in which they will convert 144,000 Jews who in turn will minister to the Gentiles during the last half of the Tribulation (**Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5**). These two witnesses will do the most incredible thing in such a short amount of time, converting so many Jews worldwide. Although the identity of these two witnesses is not given in Scripture, we do know that they will be given supernatural powers and signs, that which the Jewish people always required (**1 Corinthians 1:22**). We also know from the Old Testament Scriptures that God empowered two prophets to perform similar supernatural signs: Moses and Elijah. Both Moses and Elijah appeared together on the Mount of transfiguration with Jesus and the three disciples (**Matthew 17:3**). We also know that God will be sending Elijah back to the Jews on earth during the Tribulation (**Malachi 4:5, 6**). These two witnesses will have God's protection during the first half of the Tribulation and they will have similar powers such as Moses and Elijah had. They will have the authority to prevent rain during the days of their ministry, identifying them with Elijah, whose prayer caused it not to rain for three and one-half years (**1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17**). Turning the waters into blood (**Exodus 7:17-21**) and striking the earth with plagues (**Exodus 7-11**) is reminiscent of Moses in Egypt. So by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can conclude that God will send Moses and Elijah. In **Matthew 11:13, 14**, Jesus identified John the Baptist as "*Elijah who is to come.*"

As soon as the two witnesses finish their testimony and convert the 144,000 Jews, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, take away the daily sacrifices, sit in the Most Holy Place, and commit the abomination of desolation). Then, he will destroy the things in the temple and the city. At the same time, the Antichrist's motives will be to wipe out the Jewish people. It is also at this exact time that the Antichrist will be allowed to kill the two witnesses. Their dead bodies will lie unburied for three and one-half days in the streets of Jerusalem (known as "the great city" which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord

was crucified; **Revelation 11:8**). And all of the unrepentant Jews and unsaved Gentiles will rejoice over their death, because these two witnesses had tormented them with the message of truth and had powers over them, powers such as *fire that proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies* (**Revelation 11:5**).

These two witnesses are described as *two olive trees and two lampstands*, linking them to the vision in **Zechariah 4:14** of “*the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.*” The visions in **Zechariah** chapter **four**, with the two witnesses at that time being Zerubbabel and Joshua, point to the same subject matter concerning the Jewish people in that future Day and the anointing of the two witnesses. The building of the temple following the restoration of a remnant during Zechariah’s day foreshadows the building of the Millennial Temple by Christ, following Israel’s restoration, in that future Day of the Lord.

After the unsaved have celebrated the death of these two witnesses, they will praise and worship “the beast” (Antichrist) who killed them. But then, after three and one-half days, their celebration will come to a halt when *the breath of life from God enters the two witnesses, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them* (**Revelation 11:11**). The work and ministry of these two witnesses will be finished, and they will ascend into heaven by the command of God saying to them, “*Come up here*” (**Revelation 11:12**).

And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake [shaking], and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. (**Revelation 11:12a, 13**)

Revelation chapter **twelve** is a continuation of chapter **eleven**, placing further commentary on events surrounding Israel immediately before the Great Tribulation begins. Metaphors are used throughout this chapter to emphasize the things which are taking place, yet they should be taken as literal. For example, the “Woman” is someone literal, yet it is not a woman. The woman is clearly understood throughout **Revelation** as “*Israel.*” The symbolism of the “woman” has to do with Israel ruling over the nations during the Messianic Era, as God’s wife. Israel in **Revelation 12:1** is seen *clothed with the sun* [having governing authority],

with the moon under her feet [Gentile nations under Israel's rule], *and on her head a garland of twelve stars* [the number "twelve" in Scripture is the number of governmental perfection, showing regality — the twelve tribes of Israel].

Israel is referenced as *being with child; she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth* (**Revelation 12:2**). This description of Israel pertains to their judgment during the Great Tribulation, their pain and suffering through this horrific time. They will be crying out to the Lord for deliverance. God will hear their cry and He will prepare a safe place in the wilderness for them for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. This occurrence is also prophesied in **Matthew 24:16-22**.

A great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads (**Revelation 12:3a**) will seek to destroy the woman, Israel. The "dragon" referenced here and throughout the Book of **Revelation** is Satan, having seven diadems (ruling crowns; one holding the scepter).

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth (**Revelation 12:4**). This phrase is in reference to Satan and a third of his angels being cast out of heaven down to the earth (further commentary seen in **Revelation 12:7**), as he seeks to devour the woman, Israel, with great wrath — *because he knows that he has a short time* (**Revelation 12:12c**).

We see that the dragon, Satan, was ready to devour Israel's Child *as soon as it was born*. In keeping with the timeframe in which this is referring, which is the start of the Great Tribulation, we can see that the male Child here, used as a metaphor, has to be a newly formed "Child" or "Group" that is most threatening to Satan. This newborn or newly formed "Child" must come from the "Woman," the lineage of Israel, and therefore of Christ. It is clear to see then that the male "Child" spoken of here is the 144,000 Jews, those sealed by God (**Micah 5:3, 4**). This male "Child" who is to *rule all nations with a rod of iron* and who will be *caught up to God and His throne* (**Revelation 12:5**), is referring to the 144,000 Jews who will be chosen to rule on earth during the Messianic Era.

Revelation 12:7 presents additional commentary concerning Satan and his angels being cast out of heaven and down to the earth. In **Revelation**

12:9, we are given the identity of “the dragon:”

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:13 gives further commentary concerning Satan being cast down to earth and persecuting Israel at the start of the Great Tribulation, just at the time when the 144,000 Jews have been sealed by God and are ready to minister to the Gentiles worldwide. The people of Israel will be told to run for their lives and will be given a safe haven in the wilderness for these last three and a half years from Satan. Though Satan will attempt to go there and destroy the remnant, God will protect them from him. He will be enraged by his inability to destroy the woman, Israel and part of the remnant (144,000 Jews), in the wilderness, so then he resorts to making war against *the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17)*. This is the remaining remnant of Jews (144,000) who are scattered, who have received the testimony of Jesus Christ and have kept God’s commandments.

Revelation chapter **thirteen** gives additional commentary on the identity of “the beast from the sea” and “the beast from the earth.” The “sea” is usually used in Scripture to refer to the Gentile nations and the “land or earth” is used to refer to the nation of Israel. Therefore, the beast arising from the “sea” or Gentile nations will be a Gentile from a Gentile land. And the second beast arising from the “earth,” specifically from the nation of Israel, will no doubt be a Jew from the land of Israel.

The beast from the sea is revealed to be a political leader, who, by means of deception, will achieve worldwide dominion. In the Book of **Revelation**, he is first mentioned in chapter **six**, verse **one**, riding forth, *conquering and to conquer*. He is known as the Antichrist, and is the second beast of the unholy trinity of Satan.

The beast from the earth is revealed to be a false spiritual prophet and leader, who will have power from Satan to perform supernatural powers and signs. He will direct his attention to the beast from the sea, the Antichrist, causing those who dwell on the earth to worship him. He will be a Jew, causing both Jews and Gentiles to worship the image of the

beast or be killed. He is known as the False Prophet, and is the second beast of the unholy trinity of Satan.

The beast from the sea, the Antichrist, is the one whom Satan and the False Prophet direct their attention. It is this man that Satan will give control of Gentile world power by extending “*his power, his throne, and great authority.*” (**Revelation 13:2**)

All three (Satan, Antichrist and False Prophet) will form the unholy trinity. Satan will imitate God, forming his trinity as a counterfeit to the Holy Trinity. The first beast, the Antichrist, will be the son of Satan and the second beast, the False Prophet will be the counterfeit spirit, imitating the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit gives all the attention to Jesus Christ, the False Prophet will give all the attention to the Antichrist.

Miracles and signs will be performed by the False Prophet to draw attention to and worship the Antichrist.

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. (Revelation 13:13)

The Antichrist and his kingdom is seen so closely parallel with Satan that the dragon himself is depicted as having the seven heads and ten crowned horns in **Revelation 12:3**. In **Revelation 13:1**, the Antichrist is seen having seven heads and ten horns:

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

The Antichrist will be considered the seventh head commanding his ten-kingdom confederation of nations (**Psalms 83:5**). And according to **Revelation 17:9, 10**, these seven heads have to do with “*seven mountains*” depicting “*seven kings.*” The ten-kingdom confederation is referenced by the use of “*ten horns,*” also referring to “*ten kings,*” in **Daniel 7:7**. This *seventh head or seventh ruler* (Antichrist) in **Revelation 13:2, 3** will be killed and then will be raised from the dead after he comes into power. In **Revelation** chapter **seventeen** he is seen ascending out of the bottomless pit (abyss). Then, once the Antichrist has been raised, he is viewed as an eighth beast, though he is still connected as the seventh

beast. When this occurs, the earth dwellers who witness this event will marvel, saying, “*Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?*” (**Revelation 13:4**)

To fully understand the Antichrist as the seventh ruler, then the eighth after his resurrection, we must look to the Book of **Daniel**. The Book of **Daniel** concerns God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, from the time God placed them in the hands of the Gentiles under Nebuchadnezzar, the first king (first Antichrist) of Babylon, in 605 B.C. to the end times, when once again God will place Israel under the future Antichrist, the last king of Babylon. During Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion of the kingdom of Judah, the Jewish people were taken out of their land and transferred to Babylon. Israel was placed in the hands of the Gentiles then, and will continue to be in the hands of the Gentiles until the Antichrist’s kingdom in the future is put down.

The Assyrian Antichrist will be considered the seventh and then the eighth ruler of Babylon, and will represent the fourth sequential kingdom (the fourth of “*the four great beasts*” of **Daniel 7**), forming the one Babylonian kingdom, one world kingdom yet future. In **Daniel 2:31**, Daniel’s dream of the great image is seen standing in Babylon before the king. Therefore, one kingdom is in view, and the kingdom represented by the image is Babylonian throughout all four parts of the image.

The three powers, coming from different areas (represented by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass), all reigned from Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar and his successors were the head of gold and *reigned in Babylon*. Then, the Medes and Persians represented by the arms of silver conquered the Babylonian kingdom and they *reigned in Babylon*. The third conquest of Babylon was by the Grecians, who were the belly and thighs of brass, and they *reigned in Babylon*. Babylon was the only kingdom presented in Daniel’s image, ruled by four conquerors. Then Daniel identifies the fourth part of the image, the fourth and last conqueror of Babylon, and is represented by the legs of iron and by the feet part of iron and part of clay. This undoubtedly will be the kingdom of the Antichrist. He will also *reign in Babylon* in the future, and it will consist of a one world kingdom.

Beginning in **Daniel 11**, the context concerns the rise and fall of six kings,

followed by the rise of a seventh. Daniel noted that Alexander the Great, king of Greece, subdued three kings of Persia. After his death, this *third* Greco-Babylonian kingdom would be divided among his four generals (**Daniel 11:4**). And out of one of these four kingdoms which consist of Egypt, Seleucid (to include Tyre), Macedonia and Thrace [See map on page 316], the future Assyrian Antichrist will arise, referred to as *the little horn* in **Daniel 7:8; 8:8, 9**. Then in **Daniel 11:5**, the *future* Antichrist will continue with the conquest of three more kings – the king of the South, the king of the North, and the raiser of taxes. Therefore, the Antichrist will be the seventh king, the last king of Babylon. Then, details concerning this seventh king begin in **Daniel 11:21** and move along through the remainder of **Daniel** chapter **11**, concluding with his fall and end.

The Antichrist is seen numerous places in the Old Testament, referred to in different ways and by different names. There is a tremendous amount of information concerning this “man of sin” and because of this it should come as no surprise as to who he is when he arises on the scene. But unfortunately, because of man’s lack of knowledge concerning this man and from the Word of God altogether, he will be able to rise on the scene and deceive the masses, and this includes many in Israel. God will have raised this man up to accomplish His plan and purpose for Israel. This man, who will seek to destroy Israel, will be the person whose actions God will use to bring about Israel’s deliverance. The same distressful wailing to be heard in the camp of Israel in Babylon during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign was heard in the camp during the days of the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt and will be heard again during the days of the future Assyrian Antichrist (**Micah 5:5, 6**). Only this time, with the future Antichrist, God will succeed in bringing Israel to the place of repentance and to bring about their final deliverance.

The False Prophet is introduced in **Revelation 13:11** having *two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon*. The lamb with two horns is the emblem of Jewish worship and religious authority; therefore, it is evident that the False Prophet will be a Jew and a false spiritual leader. His message and authority will come from the devil, indicating that his speech is filled with false, deceiving messages portraying a holy man outwardly, but inside he will be full of evil. After the Antichrist is killed and then allowed by God to be raised from the Bottomless Pit (now known as the eighth ruler), the False Prophet will have those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the first beast for idol worship. The False Prophet will

be granted power to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image will be able to both speak and cause those on the earth to worship it or be killed by it.

A type of this image is referenced in the Old Testament with the first king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who had set up an image of gold as a symbol of the character of Babylon under his rule, and all were commanded to worship his image or be cast into the fiery furnace (**Daniel 3:1**). There were three Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego — whom the king had placed over the affairs in the province of Babylon, who refused to worship the image, and were cast into the furnace of fire. The furnace was heated seven times hotter than normal; so hot, that it slew the men casting them into the fire. But the three Jews were protected in the fire, with Christ in their midst, that not a hair on their head was singed, nor did they smell like smoke when they were removed from the furnace. The king realized what had occurred and decreed that all peoples, nations, and tongues were to recognize and honor the God of the Jews.

This event foretells the events of the Tribulation, in which once again the world will be commanded to worship an image or be killed, and the Jews who refuse will receive salvation from God; the end result will be deliverance of the Jewish people, and the God of the Jews recognized and honored by the Gentile nations.

The image and the False Prophet will also cause all to receive a mark of the beast, which would consist of either his name or his number. The name or the number of the beast will be placed either on the right hand or on the forehead. Again, Satan imitates God and uses the same means to attempt to place ownership and authority over man, but Satan's reasons are done for evil and to destroy man. The mark is an evil counterfeit of the seal on the foreheads of the servants of God. Without this mark, no one will be able to buy or sell. The name of the beast is not provided, however the number of his name is given as "*the number of a man: His number is 666.*" With all of this information provided of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, it would be very easy to identify them when they do surface. And the time is near when they will arise and come upon the whole world with destruction in their heart.

Revelation chapter **fourteen** concerns the 144,000 witnesses, with additional commentary to that which was previously given in **Revelation**

chapters **seven** and **twelve**. These three chapters present different information concerning the 144,000 Jews. **Revelation** chapter **seven** provides information concerning the sealing of the 144,000, and their witnessing to the multitudes. **Revelation** chapter **twelve** presents them as *the male Child* after all 144,000 have been saved (the new birth), and gives the time period (the first half of the Tribulation) when this is complete.

In the beginning of the Great Tribulation (last three and a half years) when the abomination of desolation is committed in the Temple, the Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea will be told to run for their lives. A remnant of the people will escape from the devil to a place that God has prepared for them in the wilderness or the mountains. And the remainder of the Jews will either be killed or sold as slaves to the Gentiles. Most of the Jews who are alive will be driven out of their land and scattered among the Gentile nations. Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed at this time. After the Antichrist has done his damage and the judgments are complete, then the Jewish people will repent and cry out to the Lord. It is at this point in time that the Lord Jesus Christ will return and restore the Jewish people back to their land. He will send His angels out to re-gather all of the Jews from the four corners of the earth. He will stand at the mount with a rod of iron to war against the Gentile nations and the beast in the battle of Armageddon, and He will deliver His people from them.

All of the nations of the earth, to include Babylon, will be utterly destroyed. The governments of the earth, along with trade and commerce, will collapse and cease to exist. This will mark the end of Man's Day. The Messianic Era will at this point be ushered in and the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Revelation chapter **fourteen** provides an explanation of events surrounding the removal of the 144,000 Jews (*male Child*) from the earth at the beginning of the Great Tribulation: *She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman [Israel] fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days [three and a half years]* (**Revelation 12:5, 6**). See also **Isaiah 66:7-13**

The male Child, the 144,000 Jews, is now seen in **Revelation 14:1-5** in

Christ's presence on Mount Zion in heaven:

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpist playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Just as the 144,000 Jews will have carried God's message worldwide to the Gentile nations during the last half of the Tribulation, so also will the remnant of Jews, the entire Jewish nation, carry God's message worldwide to the Gentile nations during the Millennium:

"The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, And no one shall make them afraid." (Zephaniah 3:13) [See also Zechariah 8:15-17]

The removal of the 144,000 Jews from the earth is seen in **Revelation 12:4-6** following the casting of Satan and his angels out of heaven to the earth and at the time when the Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea flee for their lives. This will take place at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. The 144,000 Jews will be removed from Satan's and Antichrist's domain on earth, and transported to heaven before the throne of God. Then after they have been trained for their position as ministers of the gospel of the kingdom, they will be sent back to the earth to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles worldwide for three and one-half years, until the end of the Messianic Era. This event is revealed in **Matthew 24:14**:

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world

as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

The 144,000 Jews are considered “firstfruits” to God and to the Lamb, that is, they are ranked the first fruit of the nation, the first to produce the fruit of the message of the kingdom to all the earth. Just as Christ is the firstfruits of those who have died, the first to be resurrected and is the guarantee of our resurrection, so also are the 144,000 Jews the firstfruits of the nation during the Tribulation, because of their ministry worldwide.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23)

These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14:4b)

The 144,000 Jews were “redeemed from the earth,” and were “redeemed from among men” first during the Tribulation because *these are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins (Revelation 14:4)*. In other words, they remained pure, rejected false doctrine and did not worship other gods. Regarding their testimony for Christ, *Their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God (Revelation 14:5)*.

And because they were redeemed first from the Tribulation, being “firstfruits to God and to the Lamb,” *they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth (Revelation 14:3)*. Since this song is about those who will be kings and priests in the kingdom, only those redeemed from the earth during the Tribulation who are chosen as the elect (144,000 Jews, i.e. the remnant) are allowed to learn it and sing it.

Immediately after the 144,000 Jews have been introduced in **Revelation 14:1-5** before the throne of God, an angel is seen *flying in the midst of heaven, having the “everlasting”* [meaning “age-lasting” or “Millennial”] *gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who*

made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Revelation 14:6, 7).

This angel in **Revelation 14:6, 7**, seen flying in heaven amongst the throne where the 144,000 Jews were present, was simply making an announcement. The everlasting [“age-lasting”] gospel, which the angel possessed, would be given to the 144,000 Jews to preach to those who dwell on the earth — *to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people* — from the Tribulation until the end of the Millennium. Israel is the nation whom God called into existence to deliver His message to the Gentile nations throughout the earth, not angels. And in view of Israel’s calling, the reference in these verses has to do with an angel appearing with the message that the 144,000 are to go back to the earth to proclaim until the end of the Millennium.

Then, in **Revelation 14:8-11**, two other angels make additional announcements to the 144,000 Jews so that they again would relay the message to the Gentile nations on the earth. We see in **Revelation 14:12** that the third angel is speaking about the 144,000 Jews and those saved on the earth, saying to them,

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

The ministry of the 144,000 Jews will reach the ends of the earth over a short period of time (three and a half years). Then, immediately after the Tribulation, when Christ returns, He will gather the nation of Israel, deliver them to the wilderness to be judged, and restore them to their land, with the scepter placed back in Israel’s hands and the theocracy restored to them. Then, judgment on the nations is seen in **Revelation 14:14-16**:

Then I looked and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

But first, Christ and His angels will gather the remnant of Israel from the

Gentile nations of the earth, and He will also raise those who are dead, and bring them all back to their land. In order for the promises of God and the prophecies to be fulfilled, the nation of Israel as a whole must be resurrected as an earthly people and restored to an earthly land for an age-lasting and eternal possession.

Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!” Therefore prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it,” says the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

Then say to them, Thus says the Lord God, “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountain of Israel. (Ezekiel 37:21, 22)

Since the 144,000 Jews have been received by God as the firstfruits of His harvest, and the whole house of Israel has been gathered back to their land in preparation for the harvest (gathering for the end of the age), the rest of the harvest of the earth is now ripe for judgment, as well as for deliverance. Christ will deal with the main harvest--judgment on the nations, and the destruction of Gentile world power (**Joel 3**). And those among the saved (Gentiles) who come out of the Tribulation alive, both faithful and unfaithful, will appear for judgment before Christ. The faithful and unfaithful at this time will be separated, as seen in **Matthew 25:31-46**, the sheep and the goats judgment. It appears that this will be a judgment of the saved who survived the Tribulation, part of the “reaping of the earth.” Once the whole of the nation of Israel is gathered back to their land and the saved Gentiles have been judged, then God will gather in the Gentile nations to the Mount of Megiddo outside of Jerusalem for battle; *the battle of the great day of God Almighty*” (**Revelation 16:14c; Joel 3**).

This is what is meant by “gather the cluster of the vine of the earth” [gathering the Gentile nations] into “the great winepress of the wrath of God” [battle of God Almighty] seen in **Revelation 14:17-20**:

Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth [Gentile nations], and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city [outside the city of Jerusalem in the valley of Megiddo], and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. [Battle of Armageddon]

A parallel to this Scripture can be seen in **Revelation 19:14, 15**:

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

We can also relate the previous Scripture with the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy from the Old Testament:

For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations [referring to Gentile nations of the earth], and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [the name “Jehoshaphat” means “The Lord Judges” and is probably a symbolic name for the great battle in the Valley of Megiddo].

And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, they have divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people...Behold, I will raise them [Israel] out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head. Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for

war!...Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around...For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, The vats overflow—for their wickedness is great.” (Joel 3:1-3, 7, 9, 11-13)

The following is a summary of the sequence of events which will occur in *the latter days*:

1) After the Church is removed from the earth to heaven, and immediately following their judgment, Christ will open the seven-sealed scroll, which contains the terms for the redemption of the inheritance, opening the Tribulation. The five seals, to include the five trumpets and the five bowls, will bring about the most horrific judgments that ever came upon the earth and will last for approximately seven years. Beginning with the first seal, the Antichrist will come into power and deceive the nations, including the nation of Israel, with a covenant of peace. The Jewish Temple will be rebuilt and the two witnesses will be sent down from heaven to minister and convert the 144,000 Jews. Babylon will also be rebuilt, and will be the place where the Antichrist sets his throne. These events will take place the first three and a half years of the Tribulation.

2) The second through the fifth seal reveals the events of the Great Tribulation, the last three and one-half years. This is when the Antichrist will break his covenant with the nation of Israel, will commit the abomination of desolation in the Temple, will desecrate the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, and will slay many Jews, with the remaining being sold as slaves and scattered amongst the Gentile nations. The remnant (144,000) will flee to the mountains or to the wilderness and will be protected by God. Many saved Gentiles, who will receive the message from the 144,000 Jews, will be slain for the testimony of Jesus Christ. They will be the martyrs found under the altar in Christ’s presence in heaven. Satan will be cast down to earth from heaven and with great wrath will attempt to kill the remnant in the wilderness and then the remaining who are scattered amongst the nations. The 144,000 Jews will be removed from the earth to heaven for a short period of time to be taught God’s message and then sent back to carry the message to all the nations of the earth. The two witnesses will be killed and on the third day, they will be raised alive to heaven. These four judgments will bring about widespread war, death, famine, and pestilence upon the earth from the governments

under the Antichrist. A third of the Jews will be killed and a fourth of all mankind will die throughout the earth.

3) The sixth seal reveals the cries of Israel to God and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. Along with His angels, Christ will gather the whole nation of Israel (now as a repentant and believing people), judge them in the Wilderness, and restore them back to their land. There will be a 75-day period at this time beyond the end of the Tribulation and the six of the seven Jewish Feasts will be fulfilled, with the seventh feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, being fulfilled at the opening of the Millennial Kingdom (See page 306 and 713). The entire world, to include Babylon and the Antichrist, will groan because of the total collapse of the government, of trade, and commerce. Christ will judge those who are saved Gentiles and separate the faithful from the unfaithful. Then, Christ will gather the Gentile nations into the Mount of Megiddo outside of Jerusalem for the great battle of Almighty God. The armies of the beast will consist of over 200 million soldiers. Christ will capture the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet and cast them alive into the lake of fire. The remaining soldiers who followed them and fought against Christ will be slain with the sword of His mouth. Then, Christ will capture Satan, bound and cast him into the bottomless pit for one thousand years (the Messianic Era).

4) The seventh seal marks the completion of Man's Day and the ushering in of the Messianic Era. The nation of Israel will be restored to their land, having immortal and glorified natural bodies (like Adam and Eve before they sinned) and inherit the earthly kingdom, along with the redeemed Gentiles (**Amos 9:12**). Israel will minister the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles. The twelve tribes of Israel will rule and reign with Christ from Jerusalem over the Gentile nations. The Bride of Christ from among the Church, some Old Testament saints and the martyrs from the Tribulation (Tribulation saints) will inherit the heavenly kingdom, having spiritual and glorified bodies, and will rule and reign from the kingdom in heaven over all the earth, sharing the throne with Christ.

Revelation chapter **seventeen** presents a detailed word-picture of why God allowed Israel's desolations in the past, the purpose of the Tribulation, and God's purpose for Israel in the future. After the seventh bowl is poured out, everything seen in **Revelation** chapters **17-19** pertains to the beast (Antichrist), his kingdom, and the *harlot woman* (Israel)

involved in this kingdom. This is the subject matter seen in these chapters immediately before the destruction of Gentile world power and the end of Man's Day. But overall, the main scope of **Revelation** chapter **seventeen** through the first part of **Revelation** chapter **twenty** has to do with God's plan and purpose regarding the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church being brought to fruition.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. (Revelation 17:1-6)

Both the "beast" and the "woman" are used as metaphors here. We understand from previous chapters in **Revelation** that the "beast" is the Antichrist and the "woman" is used to reference Israel. John was "carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness" to be shown what will take place between the Antichrist and Israel during the Tribulation on earth. The woman, Israel, was seen sitting on a scarlet beast (on the Antichrist) *having seven heads and ten horns*. Not only was the Antichrist covered in scarlet, but the woman was also *arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls*. The woman is dressed as a queen, one of royalty and wealth. And she was full of abominations and sin, committing adultery against the Lord. She is pictured as a harlot residing in the worldwide kingdom of the beast. Then, the matter presents further details concerning the woman, Israel and the beast, Antichrist. The word "mystery" is used, which usually refers to

something made known in the Old Testament but not fully revealed, as kept hidden. However, the unveiling of this “*mystery*” is revealed in the New Testament, here in **Revelation** chapter **seventeen**.

Let us look at how the Old Testament first presents this “hidden mystery.” The beast in the Old Testament is shown in Nimrod, the first king of Babylon (**Genesis 10**), continuing with the succeeding kings of Babylon and concludes with the last king of Babylon, the Antichrist. There were other kings from the Old Testament, like the Assyrian Pharaoh of Egypt, who were also a *type* of the Antichrist, just as Egypt was a type of the world. And with these kings, these types of the beast, we always see them in conjunction with the nation of Israel.

Israel is always in the midst of matters with these surrounding nations. The appearing of these beasts (Antichrists) began in **Genesis**, continued throughout the Old Testament, then the New Testament and concludes in **Revelation**. And this will not end until Christ returns.

In reference to “the great harlot,” we have numerous Scriptures identifying the *harlot woman* as the nation of Israel. In the Old Testament, God placed many judgments upon Israel because of the Jewish people’s continued disobedience over centuries of time. God took away their land and drove them out amongst the Gentile nations. *And a major reason for Israel’s punishment was harlotry, as Israel, who is the wife of God, was committing adultery with the surrounding Gentile nations (Jeremiah 3:1, 14, 20)*. God forbade Israel to have national relationships with the surrounding Gentile nations, but Israel continually disobeyed the Lord with their illicit relations, forming a union with those nations who did not believe in God, but worshiped idols and committed all sorts of wickedness. The following Scriptures in the Old Testament reference Israel’s harlotry and clearly identify Israel as the *harlot woman*.

But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be. You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them... Moreover you took your sons and your

daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire? And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.

You are an adulterous wife, who take strangers instead of her husband...And I will judge you as women who bread wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare. (Ezekiel 16:15-17, 20-22, 25, 26, 32, 38, 39)

I will do these things to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols. (Ezekiel 23:30)

How the faithful city has become a harlot! (Isaiah 1:21)

The unveiling of this “mystery” in **Revelation** chapter **seventeen** then has to do with Israel’s harlotry coming to its peak and this is the reason why God will remove them from their land and scatter them among the Gentile nations. This is the reason that God will place severe judgment upon them — to bring their harlotry to an end and for the purpose of cleansing them with a view to an inheritance.

Revelation chapter **seventeen** presents the woman, Israel, as one dressed in royalty and regality. Furthermore, we see in **Revelation 17:18** that the woman is also identified as “*that great city, that reigns over the kings of the earth.*” The “mystery” is that Jerusalem [the Jewish people] is associated with “*that great city, Babylon.*” Even though the woman is identified as possessing regal authority over the Gentile nations of the

earth, Israel will not be exercising regal power and authority until the Millennium. However, she is still considered God's firstborn sons (sonship implies rulership). Because of God's covenant to Abraham, Israel has always been recognized by God in a regal capacity. And this is why Israel *is not to be reckoned among the nations* (**Numbers 23:9**). Only one nation *on the earth* possesses a position of regal authority over the Gentile nations and that is the nation of Israel. Only one nation on the earth is considered to be a nation with God – the nation of Israel. And this is why, for the past 3,500 years since God made the covenant with Abraham, Satan (who has held the scepter) has done everything within his power to destroy Israel.

Israel will hold the scepter on earth over the Gentile nations during the Millennium, but first they must come to a place of repentance; they must be judged, cleansed and restored. They have been guilty of continued disobedience against God, playing the harlot with other nations, committing acts of idolatry, and shedding the blood of their own prophets.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! (Luke 13:34)

I saw the woman [Israel] drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17:6)

Israel's disobedience is mainly due to their involvement with the surrounding nations. (The Gentile nations today rule under Satan and his angels. But Israel, not to be reckoned among the nations, occupies a position separate from this rule, as a nation under God.) Because Israel will no longer be in her land, having left her spiritual heritage and scattered among the nations, she will be intertwined with the world's materialism and wealth. The kings of the earth will have committed adultery with Israel (by forbidden national relationships), having been *made drunk with the wine of her fornication*.

This will place the kings of the earth in a wealthy position because of Israel's condition and likewise Israel will also become wealthy in the world — but separated from God's spiritual blessings. This is the reason God will allow the Gentile nations under the rule of the Antichrist and Satan to bring about the most horrific form of persecution against the Jewish people. This is revealed in **Revelation 17:16, 17**:

And the ten horns [ten-kingdom confederation] which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

The ten-kingdom confederation [Gentile nations from the Middle East] of the beast will hate Israel, and will attempt to wipe her out completely, not realizing that their power and wealth was due to Israel. They are wealthy because they will be holding the scepter at that time over Israel and because of their relations with the nation of Israel. By attempting to destroy Israel, they will be destroying themselves as well, as this will bring about God's wrath and vengeance upon them. God will take the scepter from them, take their possessions and wealth and destroy them.

And the presiding is the focus of **Revelation** chapter **eighteen**. Since Israel will play the harlot with the Gentile nations and become wealthy, sharing in their sins and idolatry, she is considered "*Babylon the Great*." This is the "*mystery*." We see in **Daniel 11:39** that the Antichrist will cause the strongest Gentile nations to worship Satan [a foreign god], and he shall cause them to *divide the holy land for gain* (See also **Joel 3:2**). Israel shall be divided and will prosper under the rule of the Antichrist. The merchants of the world will sell their merchandise and will become rich by her, and she will become part of the "*great city, Babylon*."

The Antichrist will succeed in forming this "*great city, Babylon*" with Israel as its center, being divided amongst the surrounding Gentile nations — to include Iraq (where re-built Babylon is located; the dwelling place of the Antichrist), Iran, Syria, Egypt, even Ethiopia and Libya. The holy land will be full of abominations, with the kings of the earth committing fornication with her and living luxuriously with her. This indicates that *the great city, Babylon* and *the great harlot* are one and the same — Israel — as revealed in **Revelation 18:24**: *and in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth*. The Jewish people alone are responsible for the death of the Old Testament and New Testament prophets and saints. But in "one hour" Babylon the Great will be destroyed by the wrath of God. In one hour, God will avenge the holy apostles and prophets on Israel and the nations (**Revelation 18:20**).

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling

place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”
(Revelation 18:2a, 3)

The identity and condition of Babylon is first seen in the Old Testament:

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.” Oh my threshing and the grain of my floor! (Isaiah 21:9a, 10)

“*Oh My threshing*” is a metaphor for the punishment coming on Judah. It is evident in these Scriptures, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, that Israel had become “*that great city, Babylon.*” (See charts on page 694-697 that reference Scriptures associating Israel with Babylon)

In the Book of **Revelation**, the first mention of the fall of Israel and the Gentile nations (the fall of its governments, commerce and trade) is seen in **Revelation 14:8** -- *another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”*

Then, there is great mourning because of the collapse of trade and commerce. God’s judgment upon Israel and the nations will involve bringing their kingdoms down and reducing them to nothing; a complete desolation of the kingdom of men. This downfall will result in a foul and loathsome soreness in the hearts of men. They will be in deep despair as they see their kingdoms and their riches collapsing all around them.

And all the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls...

The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that

was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ (Revelation 18:11, 12, 14-17a)

Revelation chapter **nineteen** opens in heaven right before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. *The great multitude* presented are the martyrs; the same great multitude from **Revelation 7:9**. And they rejoiced in heaven and gave glory to God for His judgments:

“For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” (Revelation 19:2)

After the judgments are placed on Israel and Babylon has fallen, then Scripture presents “the marriage” of Christ and His bride in **Revelation 19:7-9**:

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen in the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

The events portrayed in **Revelation 19:7-9** are the wedding festivities of the Lamb and His bride in the kingdom of heaven. Due to previous decisions and determinations rendered at the Judgment seat of Christ seven years earlier and to the breaking of the seven-sealed scroll, Christ had completed the redemption of the inheritance, which is the actual marriage itself. Following judgment and immediately prior to Christ’s return for the battle of Megiddo, the wedding festivities in heaven will be held for Christ and His bride (the faithful found qualified from among the Church). This being the case, we can determine that this is when the

Babylon, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth: Past and Future

The following charts compare Scriptures that show their relation to end time prophecies, as well as the identity, condition and final outcome of Babylon:

Scriptures that relate to end time prophecies:

Babylon's Future Condition

Companion Scriptures

The Book of Ezekiel:

23:28--"For thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will deliver you (Israel) into the hand of those you hate, into the hand of those (Babylonians) from whom you alienated yourself. They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, both your lewdness and your harlotry. I will do these things to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols.'"

The Book of Isaiah:

51:24--" And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight," says the Lord."

47:5--O daughter of the Chaldeans (Babylon); for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy...And you have said in your heart, I am, and there is no one else besides me. Therefore evil shall come upon you...And desolation shall come upon you suddenly..."

The Book of Revelation:

18:2a, 3b--Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!...and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

18:7, 8a---In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' Therefore her plagues will come in one day---death and mourning and famine.

Babylon's Identity

Companion Scriptures

The Book of Isaiah:

21:9a---"Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground."

46:1---" Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; their (Babylon's) idols were on the beasts and on the cattle...they could not deliver the burden...They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; they prostrate themselves, yes, they worship."

47:1---"Come down and sit in the dust, o virgin daughter of Babylon; your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen..."

The Book of Jeremiah:

50:35--"A sword is against the Chaldeans," says the Lord, against the inhabitants of Babylon...A sword is against her treasures, and they will be robbed...For it is the land of carved images, and they are insane with their idols...Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord that He has taken against Babylon...surely He will make their dwelling place desolate with them. At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth trembles, and the cry is heard among the nations."

51:6--" Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her. Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged.

51:13--" O you (Babylon) who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come, the measure of your covetousness. Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image..."

The Book of Revelation:

14:8--And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she had made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

17:1b " Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

17:4-6 — The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Babylon 's Final Destruction

Companion Scriptures:

The Book of Isaiah:

47:12---" *Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth--Your merchants from your youth; they shall wander each on to his quarter. No one shall save you."*

13:4—"A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven--the Lord and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land."

The Book of Jeremiah:

50:15-29— "*Take vengeance on her, as she had done, so do to her...repay her according to her work; according to all she had done, do to her; for she has been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel."*

51:45--*My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the Lord.*

51:1--*Behold, I will raise up against Babylon...for in the day of doom they shall be against her all around...For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies."*

51:27--" *Set up a banner in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations against her, call the kingdoms together against her...Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes...to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant."*

51:58--" *The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; the people will labor in vain, and the nations..."*

The Book of Revelation:

18:23c, 24---" *For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."*

18:4a--" *Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."*

18:5--" *For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities, render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works..."*

17:16-18 —"*And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their (nations) hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."*

PAST AND FUTURE

1. **Daniel 3:5**--...you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
 - 1. **Revelation 13:15**--He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
2. **Daniel 7:3**--And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings...And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear...After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard... After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast...it had ten horns...and a mouth speaking pompous words.
 - 2. **Revelation 13:1**--Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.
3. **Daniel 11:36**--Then the king shall do according to his own will; he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.
 - 3. **Revelation 13:5**--And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven.
4. **Daniel 11:44**--...therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.
 - 4. **Revelation 16:14**--For they are spirits of demons, performing signs which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.
- **Daniel 12:7**-- Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall before a time, times and half a time, and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.
 - 5. **Revelation 10:5**--The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

separation takes place with the non-overcomers. We see this very thing in **Matthew 13:41-43**,

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

John was an eyewitness to this tragic event; that which of necessity must take place in order to introduce the bride and place them in their proper positions. Therefore, the non-overcomers must be cast out at this point in time, as nothing that is unholy or that offends must remain in the gates of the kingdom.

The reference to “*His wife has made herself ready*,” concerns Christians who were prepared for meeting Christ at His judgment seat. This preparation is seen outlined in a similar manner in the Book of **Ruth**. Ruth, who typifies the bride of Christ, is seen preparing herself for meeting Boaz [a type of Christ] on his threshing floor at the end of the harvest. Ruth prepared herself in three ways: She washed herself [confessed sin], anointed herself, [being filled with the Holy Spirit] and put on her best garment [performed righteous acts]. And Ruth’s preparation is the same preparation that Christian’s must make in order to gain the inheritance and become Christ’s wife. After the wedding festivities, Christ is seen returning to earth at the end of the Tribulation, after Israel has repented and cried out to the Lord.

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nation. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. He has on His robe and on His thigh

a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.
(Revelation 19:11-16)

When Israel cries out to the Lord, the “heavens will open” and Christ, accompanied by an innumerable amount of angels, will return to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. In **Revelation 19:17**, following Israel’s judgment and restoration, an angel cries with a loud voice to all the birds in the midst of heaven to come and eat *the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.* These people are the armies who followed the beast in the battle of Megiddo against Christ. These armies who gather together in the valley of Megiddo will consist of vast numbers — hundreds of millions; myriads of myriads (referring to an enormous indefinite number).

Their blood will flow to a depth up to a horse’s bridle. This slaughter will extend over a distance of about one hundred and eighty miles (**Revelation 14:20**). And the manner in which this event is referred to in Scripture is “*the great supper of God,*” because of the masses who will be killed and left for the birds to feast upon. Christ will capture the beast and the false prophet and they will be cast alive into the lake of fire.

Then, the first part of **Revelation** chapter **twenty** reveals the capturing, binding and casting of Satan to the bottomless pit (the abyss) for one thousand years. The word “abyss” comes from the Greek word *tartaros* (Strong’s #G5020) meaning “without bottom” or the “bottomless pit” (the deepest abyss of Hades). It is reserved for Satan and his fallen angels who will be incarcerated in torment. God sent an angel to lay hold of Satan and to lock him up in this part of Hades. In **Revelation 9:11**, God allowed Satan, the Destroyer and “*king over the locusts, who is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon,*” to possess the key to the bottomless pit. But here in **Revelation** chapter **twenty**, the key was now in possession of another angel, who had power over Satan to bind him in chains and to cast him down to the bottomless pit. Satan will be kept chained in the sealed abyss for one thousand years, during the time that Christ and His co-heirs will take the scepter and rule over the earth in his stead. At this point in time, Satan’s crown (diadem) will be taken from him and it will be worn by Christ, as the new Ruler; as the “*King of kings, and Lord of lords.*” Following the one thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will be released

once again for the purpose of carrying out God's final judgment upon the Gentiles. This will bring about the destruction of the earth and the heavens, in which a new earth and the new heavens will be formed, ushering in the Eternal Ages.

Then, Scripture reverts back to the throne room of God.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. (Revelation 20:4)

The ones being referred to here are the Tribulation saints, the martyrs who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.

Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4c-6)

These martyrs or Tribulation saints (individuals saved during the Tribulation who remained faithful to God unto death) were found worthy and were awarded to live and reign with Christ for one thousand years. Therefore, they were able to take part in the *first resurrection*. The word "*resurrection*" here means a "rising out from among the group." This is a reference to the separation of faithful and unfaithful believers.

The rest of the dead, which are the unfaithful believers, will take part in the second death and will not live again until the thousand years are finished. The *second death* was previously seen in **Revelation 2:11** with the Church in Smyrna. Christ promised the Church that overcoming Christians would *not be hurt by the second death*. This means that non-overcoming Christians *would* be hurt by the second death. And exactly

the same view is presented here in **Revelation 20:4-6** relative to Tribulation saints and the second death. The Tribulation saints being judged are in view. Out of this group, those who overcame and remained faithful until death will have their part in the first resurrection and will live and reign with Christ for one thousand years. But for those who did not remain faithful until death, they will have to take part in the second death, and will not have life with Christ for one thousand years. They will take part in the second resurrection after the Millennium.

The Second Death is associated with the lake of fire, as seen in **Revelation 21:8b**: *they shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* The second death for non-overcoming Christians will mean death in the age to come for one thousand years.

The saved and the unsaved will be judged separately. As for the saved, the Church will be judged first immediately following their rapture (at the Judgment Seat of Christ), then the Tribulation saints will be judged following the Tribulation. For those who do not overcome, the second death and the lake of fire come into view during the Millennium. The unsaved are not judged until *after* the thousand years are completed (at the Great White Throne Judgment) and they will experience the second death in the lake of fire forever.

A reference to the second death in the lake of fire can be seen in **Matthew 13:41, 42**, the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, when Christ explains to His disciples saying, *“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire.”* The casting into a furnace of fire here occurs with the Church, before the Millennium.

Another reference is seen in **Matthew 25:41, 46**, when *the Son of Man judges the nations* immediately after the Tribulation and separates the saved Gentiles, the faithful from the unfaithful: *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’”*

This judgment of “*everlasting*” fire does not speak of eternal verities, but

has to do with “age-lasting” or Millennial verities. Therefore, all judgments preceding the Millennium have to do solely with the saved in relation to the Millennium.

The unsaved are not judged until after the Millennium, seen in **Revelation 20:11-15**. Therefore, the unsaved dead will remain down in Hades throughout the Millennium. Then, after the Millennium, *all* of the unsaved dead from the creation of man until this point in time will be judged at the Great White Throne and will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his fallen angels forever.

We see throughout Scripture that the *place* or *state* of separation for the non-overcoming Christian in the age to come is seen as Outer darkness, or lake of fire (also known as blackness of darkness, Gehenna fire, furnace of fire) — all of these references are metaphors, and refers to a place outside of the presence of the Lord with different degrees of punishment.

Just as all overcoming Christians enter the Lord’s Temple yet are rewarded differently depending on determinations at the judgment seat pertaining to their fruit-bearing for the kingdom, so also will non-overcoming Christians be outside of the Lord’s Temple where “darkness” dwells and will wail and gnash their teeth as they are confined to judgment for one thousand years, either in outer darkness, blackness of darkness or lake of fire. Within these places, we can determine that the non-overcomers will be given different levels of punishment just as the overcomers will be given different levels of rewards.

An example of this very thing is recorded in **Luke 19:17**, having to do with the Judgment seat of Christ. In this parable, the overcomers are being rewarded differently, depending on the amount of their fruit-bearing:

“And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned five minas.’ Likewise he said to him, ‘You also be over five cities.’”

An example showing different levels of punishment rendered at the Judgment seat of Christ is recorded in **Luke 12:45-48**:

- 1) *“But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two [slay him; be killed] and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*
- 2) *And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*
- 3) *But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few.*

This parable in **Luke 12:42** reveal that there will be different levels of judgment or punishment. The second death is death of the soul and separation from Christ and the kingdom in the age to come. An example of *“being hurt by the second death”* relating to the death of the soul and body is expressed in **Matthew 10:28**,

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna).

Again, we see this exact same thing recorded in **Matthew 16:25-27**,

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

The bride of Christ will rule and reign from the heavens over the earth. Those dwelling on the earth will experience God’s righteous cleansing through His Son and His coheirs for a period lasting one thousand years. And during this time, the entire Jewish nation will go worldwide to the Gentiles with God’s message. The twelve tribes of Israel will exercise the rights of the firstborn, ruling over and blessing the Gentile nations from the earth. Christ’s kingdom will consist of two realms: 1) Christ ruling

and reigning from heaven with His bride seen in **Revelation 3:21** and 2) Christ ruling and reigning from David's throne on earth with Israel:

For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously. (Isaiah 24:23)

Immediately following the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed from the abyss to deceive the nations once again (**Revelation 20:7**). The armies from the nations of the earth will be gathered to the land of Israel, under Satan, for the same reason as before — to try and destroy Israel. *The four corners of the earth* [all the Gentile nations] are referred to as “*Gog, the land of Magog.*” The word “*Gog*” refers to a people (the Gentiles) and “*Magog*” refers to a land (land(s), or earth). And they will gather and *surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city, Jerusalem.*

God's purpose for this great battle is to put an end to unrighteousness. Following the Messianic Era, there will no longer be a need for judging or cleansing. The nation of Israel would have ministered God's message to the Gentiles worldwide, and all nations would have had the opportunity to follow Him. Therefore, once the thousand years are finished, judgment on earth will end forever, and those who have made the choice to follow Him will be saved into the Eternal Ages.

When the armies under Satan are gathered in Jerusalem, then God will destroy them all with His fiery voice, referred to as *fire that will come down from God out of heaven to devour them (Revelation 20:9)*. Satan, the dragon, will be captured and cast into the lake of fire forever, where the beast and false prophet will have been for the last one thousand years.

And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

The closing paragraph of **Revelation** chapter **twenty** depicts the final events that will end the Messianic Era. After dealing with the Gentiles, Satan and his angels, God will put an end to all matters dealing with the present heaven and the present earth. Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. God will then destroy the present heaven and earth and create a new heaven and a new earth, moving matters into the Eternal Ages, known as “*the day of God.*”

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. (Revelation 20:11)

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death... Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24-26, 28)

The Great White Throne Judgment will be the final judgment of all unsaved man. And like Christians, they will be *judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (Revelation 20:12)*. All of the unsaved from Adam until this time will be present, both *small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. (Revelation 20:12a, b)* Because they have rejected God, it is evident that their works will show them disapproved and not belonging to the Lord, but to Satan. In view of this, they will be cast into the same place prepared for the devil and his angels — the lake of fire forever, in torment day and night.

The Great White Throne Judgment will also bring an end to sin and death in relation to man, revealed in **1 Corinthians 15:25**, *For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

At the Great White Throne, the sea [a place of death] will deliver up the unburied bodies, Death will deliver up the buried bodies, and Hades will deliver up the souls. Then, all unsaved man will be judged according to their works, revealed in **Revelation 20:13-15**,

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

After all of the unsaved have been judged and condemned, then Death and Hades will also be destroyed. This will mark the end of all sin, of all unrighteousness, and of all death. From this point on, *there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4b).*

Revelation chapter **twenty-one** introduces the Eternal Ages, *with a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no more sea* (“sea” is a metaphor referring to death, as in **Revelation 20:13**). Death will no longer exist; therefore man will be immortal forever. The previous Heaven and Earth had sin in both realms, beginning with the sin of Satan and his fallen angels in heaven and then sin, through Satan, invading the earth, bringing about man’s fall. And this was the purpose for the destruction of the first heaven and the first earth by fire — to destroy sin and death once and for all.

The following Scriptures from **Revelation 21:2-8** provide an introduction and a brief synopsis of the Eternal Ages. Then, it ends with an overcomer’s promise and corresponding warnings, which relate back to the previous Millennium. God’s promise and warning is mentioned here to exhort believers to run the race in order to become co-heirs with Christ during the Millennium, an heirship position that will continue on during the Eternal Ages (but in a different capacity).

A brief description of the opening of the Eternal Ages is recorded in **Revelation 21:2-4**:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

In **Revelation 21:9-22:5** a description of the New Jerusalem is provided. **Revelation 21:9** begins again with *the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.*

In **Revelation 21:6**, the phrase “*It is done!*” is proclaimed. The consummation of God’s work throughout Man’s Day and the Lord’s Day, a time span of 7,000 years, will have been completed. God’s redemptive work of 6,000 years for man will be completed; Christ’s 1,000-year reign will be finished; and the kingdom will be delivered up to God the Father bringing in the “Day of God.”

During the Messianic Era, the kingdom, the New Jerusalem, will consist of two realms — a Jerusalem in Heaven and a Jerusalem on Earth. Christ and His co-heirs will dwell in the Jerusalem in heaven, which will be the capital of the earth; and the Jerusalem on earth will consist of a restored nation (Israel) in their land, in which Christ will also dwell. Christ will have a dual reign, on earth as it is in heaven.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect... (Hebrews 12:22, 23)

Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously. (Isaiah 24: 23)

Then, following the Messianic Era, the destruction of the present heaven and earth will bring into existence the new heaven and the new earth, and the New Jerusalem is seen coming down from heaven to rest upon the new earth. The New Jerusalem will stand on the new earth as the capital city and the center of government. The New Jerusalem, as noted in **Revelation 21:15-17**, will be over 1400 miles square and over 1400 miles high — a city so vast that it will supersede the present size of the earth. The city will be the dwelling place of God and of the Lamb. It will contain the center of government forever. And both God and His Son will administer the government of the heavens and the earth through man and angels.

A description is given concerning the construction of the New Jerusalem. The *twelve gates* will have the *names of the twelve tribes of Israel* and the *twelve foundations* will have the *names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*. The construction of the New Jerusalem will be made of precious stones and pure gold.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. (Revelation 21:22, 23)

There will be no need of a temple building, for the glory of God and of the Lamb will fill the city and *those who are saved shall walk in its light*. Unlike the Millennial kingdom, the gates to this New Jerusalem will never be shut. There shall be no darkness or night, but the glory of God and of the Lamb will shine the city at all times.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.

They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there. They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:3b)

In **Revelation** chapter **twenty-two**, the “tree of life” is seen in the midst of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The tree of life had initially been set in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve. The fruit of the tree of life was singled out amongst the numerous other trees in the Garden of Eden for a specific reason. It was to assist Adam as he exercised his rule over the earth, which was the very reason he was created in the first place — to rule and reign.

Because of Adam’s fall, the tree of life was forbidden and he was driven out from the garden. Adam could not be permitted to eat of this tree in a

fallen condition. And this is why the tree of life has not re-appeared during Man's Day, for man's redemption has not yet been realized, not until the Lord's Day. But we see in **Revelation 2:7** that partaking of the tree of life has been promised to the overcomers from among those *already possessing eternal life*.

This clearly shows that the tree of life was not to provide immortal life (for this will already be in the possession of every believer), but to provide a provision for those who will rule and reign. Therefore, regality is what is connected to the tree of life.

During the Eternal Ages, the tree of life will extend to all of the saved and its purpose will be for *the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2)*. Its leaves will provide restorative healing. In other words, God will restore all of the saved to the initial position that man occupied in the beginning of creation — to rule and reign. And during this time, all of the saved will have access to the tree of life to give them the restorative healing and wisdom needed to rule over the earth and the heavens. This tree will be available to the nations of the earth, something that was completely out of place during the Millennium, and this happened because of the end result of Israel's proclamation of God's message during the Millennium and because of Christ's rule over them as well.

During this point in time, power and authority will be exercised not only over the earth, but will be extended to the entire heavens. The new Jerusalem will come down from the heavens and will be the place from where rule will emanate, as this will be God's dwelling place. The rule and reign of the overcomers (i.e., the bride) during the Messianic Era will continue on during the Eternal Ages, but not in the same capacity, as conditions in the Eternal Ages will be different. For instance, death and sin will no longer exist in the Eternal Ages as it did in the Millennium. Therefore, there will be no need to "rule with a rod of iron." The Millennium will be a time of cleansing, teaching and judging. However, in the Eternal Ages, perfect order will exist. All of the saved will rule and reign over the ages, forever. Man's rule in that day can only extend into places throughout the heavens, and therefore man will have the ability and authority to roam it all.

Scripture reveals that the Eternal Ages will consist of continuous praise and joy. God will fashion a new cosmos that will be ready for the

enjoyment of His people. Everything former will not be remembered any longer.

In **Revelation 22:6-21**, exhortations and warnings are given in light of Christ's return and all that is to follow, and again the warning is given to His servants *the things which must shortly take place* (**Revelation 1:1; 22:6**).

In **Revelation 22:18, 19**, John provides a strict warning to those who hear the words of the prophecy of this Book — the Book of **Revelation**. This Book is extremely important because it completes and reveals all prophecy, that which is written in previous Books of both Testaments, bringing all previous revelation together in an apex. However, though the Book of **Revelation** unveils that which is concealed in the Old Testament, the same importance would have to be true of any portion of Scripture, for the whole of Scripture presents one complete picture of all facets of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The person who either *adds to* or *takes away* from its contents will receive from God the strictest punishment, a punishment with millennial consequence. God will take away the believer's position in the Millennial kingdom and he will not be able to take part as co-heir with Christ.

Christ repeated the phrase, "*Behold, I am coming quickly!*" in **Revelation 22:7, 12, 20**, to stress the importance of being prepared for His return because of the things written in this Book.

In **Revelation 22:12-17**, Christ reverted back to a time previous to the Messianic Era. He presented His testimony to the Church, exhorting them to heed His call and abide in His commandments so that they can enter His gates from the beginning of His reign and be awarded the most superlative, most superabundant and most amazing salvation — a salvation which is unimaginable to man! During His testimony, the Spirit and the bride together extend an invitation to join them in the heavenly kingdom.

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" (**Revelation 22:17**)

Charting the End Times

Church raptured
to the Judgment
seat of Christ in
heaven



7 Year Tribulation
for Israel and Gentile
Nations on earth



Christ returns & restores
Israel/Judgment of
saved Gentiles



Battle of Armageddon/
Great Supper of God



Antichrist & False
Prophet cast into
Lake of Fire



Satan bound in
Tartaros for
1000 Years



The Millennial Kingdom (The 7th Day)

1000 Year Reign of Christ

Christ reigns with His bride
(Church) from the kingdom
In heaven; and
Christ reigns with God's wife
(Israel) on earth



After 1000 years,
Satan loosed/
Final Battle

God casts Satan in
Lake of Fire/White
Throne Judgment
for the unsaved –
cast in Lake of Fire



The Eternal Ages/
New Heavens & New
Earth/New Jerusalem

THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL

(THE 7-YEAR TRIBULATION, CHRIST'S RETURN & THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM)

THE REDEMPTION OF THE INHERITANCE3 ½
YEARS

1ST SEAL = FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION (RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST [RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE]; BABYLON REBUILT; TEMPLE REBUILT IN JERUSALEM; COVENANT OF PEACE MADE WITH ISRAEL; 2 WITNESSES SENT BY GOD (MOSES & ELIJAH) WHO CONVERT 144,000 JEWS)

3 1/2
YEARS

2ND SEAL- 5TH SEAL = SECOND HALF OF THE TRIBULATION ("THE GREAT TRIBULATION": ANTICHRIST BREAKS COVENANT WITH ISRAEL [RIDER ON A RED, BLACK AND PALE HORSE]; ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION IN THE TEMPLE; DEATH & DESTRUCTION; 1/4-1/3 OF THE WORLD POPULATION WILL DIE; 2/3RD OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE WILL DIE; 144,000 JEWISH WITNESSES SEALED BY GOD WHO PREACH TO THE GENTILES; SATAN & HIS ANGELS CAST TO THE EARTH; HEAVENLY SCENE OF THE MARTYRS; FALL OF GENTILE WORLD POWER; ISRAEL REPENTS)

75
DAYS

6TH SEAL = FOLLOWING THE TRIBULATION (CHRIST'S RETURN TO THE EARTH; JUDGMENT & RESTORATION OF ISRAEL; FULFILLMENT OF THE 6 JEWISH FEASTS; JUDGMENT OF THE SAVED GENTILES; COMPLETE FALL OF GENTILE WORLD POWER & KINGDOM OF ANTICHRIST)

7TH SEAL = 7 TRUMPET & 7 BOWL JUDGMENTS CAST TO THE GENTILE NATIONS (ANTITYPE OF THE 10 PLAGUES IN EGYPT); BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON; FULFILLMENT OF THE 7TH JEWISH FEAST; USHERING IN OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

**SEVEN JEWISH FEASTS (FESTIVALS)
FULFILLED WITHIN 75 DAYS AFTER THE TRIBULATION**

Passover	Unleavened Bread	Firstfruits	Pentecost	Trumpets	Atonement	Tabernacles
<p>National conversion of Israel at Christ's return (while they are scattered throughout the world)</p> <p>Israel applies the blood, believes in the One whom they pierced</p>	<p>Israel acknowledges her sin and removes sin from the house of Israel</p>	<p>Resurrection of Old Testament Saints</p>	<p>Holy Spirit is poured on the nation of Israel following her national repentance and national baptism</p>	<p>Regathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth to their land</p>	<p>Israel is cleansed from sin. Atonement is provided for Israel's sin of crucifying her Messiah.</p> <p>New covenant made with Israel; they receive a new heart and a new spirit.</p>	<p>A time of rejoicing and a time of rest in the Millennial Kingdom on earth</p>

CHAPTER SEVEN

LIFE TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

The word “life” in Scripture is the Greek translation for “*psyche*” (Strong’s #G5590, also spelled “*psuche*”) meaning “soul, heart, mind.” The word “soul” in Scripture is also the same Greek translation for “*psyche*” (Strong’s #G5590). Therefore, *soul* and *life* mean the same thing — it encompasses our thought patterns, the fleshly desires of our heart, that which is animated by the blood, not by the spirit (**Leviticus 17:11**). The soul is the natural, the sensual and not the spiritual.

The word “transformation” is the Greek translation for *metamorphoo* (Strong’s #G3339) which means “to change, transfigure, transform.” When combined, these two words—*life transformation*—mean this: *to change our mind (our thoughts), to change our desires, or to change what’s in our heart.*

Why would we want to change our thought patterns? The thought patterns which we presently possess are those derived from our flesh, the world and therefore, the “god of this world.” These thoughts have become so familiar, so natural, that we don’t even recognize they are thoughts which ignite bad works of the flesh, works which are contrary to what God requires. And therefore, as children of God, we are moving in the wrong direction, a direction that leads to destruction.

If we allow the enemy of our soul to deceive us, then we cannot please God with any of our works, resulting in our failure to overcome our soul-life and enter the kingdom. The lies of Satan have been molded into the world, and therefore into our own lives through years of wrong thinking and demonic conditioning. And often these strongholds are so well established that their pulling down requires an absolute trust in God and His Word. We will have to do a re-evaluation on everything that the world says and a complete separation from how the world thinks, because what God commands us to do is totally opposite to what we have come to

know. Thus, we will have to do a complete turn-around of ourselves.

God's will is that we transform our life, so that we will be presented glorious in the coming kingdom. God has given us everything we need to accomplish this transformation, and it is derived by choosing to be faithfully obedient to His commandments. He has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us through this transformation. As always, the choice is ours.

“It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh profits nothing.”
(John 6:63)

“...the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things...” **(John 14:26)**

In **Romans 12:1, 2**, Paul reveals the process of transformation, the “metamorphosis” that must take place in every believer in order to be found worthy by Him:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living [soul] sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Paul is *begging* (to “beseech”) us to present our bodies a *soul sacrifice* — in other words, to sacrifice or kill the soul (our thoughts and fleshly desires) and abide in the Spirit, so that we can be holy and set apart, which is acceptable to God. This is every believer's reasonable service to God, as servants of Christ, because we are part of His body and *as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy”* **(1 Peter 1:15, 16)**.

A companion Scripture can be seen in **Ephesians 4:20-24**:

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was

created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

A Christian, being brought forth from above, is now in a position to put off the “old man,” meaning to put the flesh to death and put on the “new man in Christ,” meaning to conduct himself in the character and nature of God. After this fashion, he can transform into the very likeness of Christ. How hard is this for a believer to do? It is actually impossible for one to do this on his own. The only way that one could put away fleshly desires would be to allow the Holy Spirit to lead. This can only be done by choosing to think as the Spirit thinks — *be renewed in the spirit of your mind* — that which can be found in the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit, through the study of the Word of God, will impart wisdom and understanding, replacing the thought patterns and fleshly desires. This process will involve not conforming (meaning “to form or to mold”) to this world, but transforming ourselves by renewing our thoughts in line with the Spirit. The more we renew our mind to that which the Holy Spirit teaches, the more we will be able to separate ourselves from the desires of the flesh and the world. It is this life-long process that will bring about a full transformation.

The Holy Spirit who dwells in our spirit will, if we allow, help us to walk in the Spirit daily so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh:

Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
(Galatians 5:16)

This world, ruled under Satan, is evil and goes against everything that is of God. If we remain in the desires of the world, it will entice us to share in its evil ways. This is the reason why we must separate ourselves from the world and all its lusts. This is the reason why God sent the Holy Spirit — to help us to be holy and set apart from the world. In **John 14:15-17**, Christ says,

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

There are three constant steps within the process of transformation that

every believer must take. These three steps are vital to achieving victory. They are 1) Prayer, 2) Hearer of the Word, and 3) Doer of the Word.

In the sections to follow, we will discuss these three steps in detail to better equip ourselves in the process of transformation. Please be aware that this transformation is the will of God and therefore is not a suggestion, but a commandment. It is serious business — a choice of life or death. Once we have been granted the light or the understanding of our purpose in Christ (the Word of the kingdom), then we are to move forward in the hope of achieving the goal of the inheritance into the heavenly kingdom. In the course of our lives, God challenges us with a golden opportunity, a seemingly impossible hurdle, or a tragedy...and how we react or fail to react determines the course of our future. We have been brought together as children of God for a special reason. Let's run the race and win.

All Christians have the same exact calling, a heavenly calling, a calling to present ourselves worthy in this present age so that we can rule and reign with Christ from heaven in that coming Day. And the realization of our calling is based on our choice to be faithfully obedient in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in. We must walk worthy of our calling with every breath that we take, just as Paul stated in **Ephesians 4:1-6**:

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech [beg] you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Christ's body is *one* body made up of all Christians — the faithful and the unfaithful. There is not a different body for Baptists and a different body for Methodists and so on. And the Word says there is only *one* hope of our calling — the hope of Christ's return, of receiving our inheritance within the heavenly realm of the kingdom, and the salvation of our soul. We shall all stand as one body at the Judgment seat of Christ and give an account. What will matter on that Day is whether we were faithfully obedient in respect of our calling. Will you choose right now to begin your life transformation and be faithfully obedient to your calling as part

of the body of Christ? Will you choose right now to live for Christ, no matter the circumstance?

I have a friend who lost his job, his savings, his wife and his home. But he held on to his faith — the only thing he had left. There were moments when it seemed easier to give up and his thoughts filled with the notion that he would be worth more dead than alive. One day he stopped to watch some workers doing stonework on a big church building. One of them was chiseling a triangular piece of stone with great precision. “What are you going to do with that?” asked my friend. The worker said, “See that little opening way up there near the spire? Well, I’m shaping this down here so it will fit in up there.” Tears filled my friend’s eyes as he walked away, for it seemed that God had spoken through the worker to explain the ordeal through which he was passing, “I’m shaping you down here so you’ll fit in up there.”

This story brings to mind the following two Scriptures:

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Peter 5:10)

...that He might sanctify and cleanse her [bride of Christ] with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:26, 27)

Trials and tribulations will come our way as a testing of our faith. God is preparing us to be kings and priests in His kingdom one day. Trials will come in all forms, including suffering for Christ. This world, ruled under Satan, persecutes those for “righteousness sake” and for “His name’s sake.” Yet, if we should be called to suffer all our lives, it would not be long compared to 1000 years. Paul left us with this in mind when he said:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)

Christians are in the position of heirs to the grandest estate ever to exist if they gladly endure a “few days” of suffering with the hope that they shall soon come into their most amazing inheritance. We will reap later what we sow now and such a glorious hope hangs a halo over the drab existence of the here and now.

We cannot lose our zest for this hope even during our present discomfort, knowing that we are destined to be co-heirs to a heavenly throne and a bride to God’s Son. When we carefully seek our inheritance and understand its value, complaining becomes foolish; behaving in the manner of the world is unworthy; and love, gentleness, and meekness become the hallmarks of God’s nobility. “All things” are taken in stride; burdens become blessings in disguise; every wound and every trial is for our good and prepares us to be that “*good and faithful servant*” which enables us to be found worthy to rule in Christ’s kingdom to come. Our roles and responsibilities as servants of Christ will be realized and we will make every opportunity to be faithfully obedient in whatever Christ called us to do for the building of His kingdom.

Beyond the limits of the realm of human imagination is this calling, that, as a result, we are challenged to walk worthy of it. Given the seriousness with which God views it, this is a challenge to be taken with great earnestness. This is no small matter. Let us right now begin our journey of life transformation and let’s take it one step at a time, never giving up, *forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, let us press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (**Philippians 3:13a, 14**).

CHAPTER SEVEN – PART ONE

PRAYER: OUR CONNECTION WITH GOD

The word “spirit” is the Greek translation for “*pneuma*” (G4151) meaning “wind, breath or a state of mind.” The word refers to three things in the New Testament: 1) the Holy Spirit, 2) man’s spirit, and 3) angels. Man was created and is born with a spirit, soul and body — created in the image and likeness of God. Due to the fall of Adam, man died spiritually. But thanks be to God that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and redeem our spirits once again. The moment one has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, his spirit is redeemed and is made “alive” by the Holy Spirit. He now has the ability to commune with God and to be spiritually discerned.

Unsaved individuals do not possess a redeemed spirit, but an unredeemed spirit, which remains “*dead in trespasses and sin.*” Therefore, their spirit is separated from God and is not spiritually discerned. Because they do not believe, their spirit was not made alive by the Holy Spirit, and therefore, cannot commune with God, nor do they have the ability to understand spiritual things. The spirit in unsaved man is dead.

But Christians have the ability to commune with God through prayer and are able to understand the spiritual lessons in God’s Word. Jesus Christ is the supreme model of One devoted to prayer. In just three years of His ministry on the earth, Jesus spent much time in prayer. He prayed before every difficult task in His ministry. He prayed fervently to God when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. He went into the garden and fell down with His face to the ground, praying,

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Matthew 26:39)

Jesus prayed long and often (**Luke 5:16**). When He was in a crowd, He prayed. When He was with His disciples, He prayed. And when He was alone and in agony, He prayed more earnestly (**Luke 22:44**). Jesus prayed for Himself (**John 17:1**), He prayed for His disciples (**John 17:6**) and He prayed for all believers (**John 17:20**). We also are to “*Pray without ceasing*” (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). This should be the will and manner of every true follower of Jesus Christ. No matter how dim a

situation may seem, never stop praying.

Prayer keeps our relationship with God strong. It enables us to share our circumstances with God and to ask for God's help and strength. Prayer needs to be an integral part of our lives, not just during troublesome times. Jesus frequently prayed alone, separating Himself from every earthly distraction. As we make prayer a daily habit, we will have the strength and faith to pray that God's will be done in our lives.

We must learn to pray far more for spiritual victory — that our spirit will have victory over our soul — than anything else. Whatever we ask of God, effective prayer must always be offered in faith. We see this in **James 1:5-8**:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Prayer is powerful; it is a voice of faith directed to God. Prayer should be a way of life, communicating our requests, our thanks, our praises, our confessions of sin, and our thoughts to God daily. As we face our trials and sufferings, we must not forget that our prayers are subject to His will. This takes the burden off of us and gives it to the Lord. His will is always best, even if it does not seem that way to us at the time.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6)

Throughout Scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we find the record of God's people whose prayers have been answered — always in correlation to God's will. We see this with Daniel as he faithfully prayed for the people of Israel in **Daniel 9**; he was heard and immediately God answered him. We see this with Elijah as *he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:17b, 18).*

Jesus Christ Himself prayed earnestly to God during His suffering on earth, yet God allowed Him to go through the suffering so that He would truly function as our High Priest and King.

...in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest...(Hebrews 5:7-9)

Jesus' suffering enabled Him to understand our weaknesses and be able to intercede before God for us in heaven as Mediator. Not only that, but also to fulfill God's plans and purposes for Him and us—for Him, to be awarded High Priest and King of kings; and for us, to cleanse us and offer us salvation, in order that we may partake in the inheritance with Him. So then Jesus' suffering and death was necessary in order to fulfill God's promises to His Son/sons.

In the same way, we will have to endure hardship and suffering so that we are perfected and prepared for Christ's kingdom. Our prayers of faith will be heard during our times of suffering, and will be answered according to God's will. We should pray that God will provide the strength for us to endure and lead us towards the path of victory.

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The Holy Spirit in us assists in our weaknesses when we pray. Even though we do not always know what to pray for or how best to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for us. And Christ knows the mind of the Spirit and intercedes on our behalf before the throne of God. Ultimately, it is to accomplish God's will for us. All circumstances, therefore, work together for the believer's good, so that the believer will be conformed to Christ now for the purpose of reigning with Him then.

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself

makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)

Scripture is quite clear as to what we should pray for, first and foremost, and how we should pray. This is seen in **Matthew 6:5**. Scripture reveals that prayer should be done without deceit or pretense. Prayer is a time of intimacy with God; a form of worship revealing our sincerity and seriousness for Him.

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. (1 Peter 4:7)

Scripture is also quite clear about not using *vain repetitions* as some do, reducing prayer to empty recitation. The Lord knows our heart. He also knows the things we currently need before we even ask Him. Rather, we should begin our prayers with thanksgiving, focusing on Him and the future kingdom.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

We ought to be pray according to the following manner:

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and The glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

The hallowing of the Father's name means the arrival of God's kingdom. We pray for His kingdom to come and for His will be done. His kingdom will be established on earth as it is in heaven — a dual kingdom. If we are

to be a part in His heavenly kingdom, we are to pray that He gives us His daily bread, which is the understanding of His Word daily, so that we can know how to prepare ourselves to enter His kingdom. Our prayer must include a confession of our sins, asking forgiveness. We must forgive others so that at the Judgment seat of Christ, He will forgive us. God will never deliberately lead a person to commit sin, yet He does sometimes place His people in adverse circumstances for the purpose of testing their faith, in chastening and in building godly character. In this case, as we ask for forgiveness, we can also ask Him not to lead us into the temptations of the devil, but to deliver us from him. Then, we are to acknowledge with praise that He is in possession of the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

Scripture reveals that the prayer of faith for others is powerful, for God hears and He may perform miracles in them, especially when they are lacking faith, knowledge and strength in the Lord:

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray...Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:13-16)

In **Philippians 1:9**, Paul prays that his brethren may direct their love towards God by their desire for knowledge and discernment of His Word. And this we can pray for other Christians as well, that God may give them the desire of His Word and open their eyes of understanding.

In **Philippians 1:19**, Paul furthermore reveals that the prayer of his brethren together with the work of the Holy Spirit is vitally important for his deliverance, referring to his daily empowering to endure the troubling situation before him. Therefore, the prayer of believers on behalf of other believers may produce deliverance or rescue by God from blindness, spiritual warfare, trials and tribulations. An individual who remains in a state of blindness to God's word is one who is walking in darkness, and, if continued, will ultimately lead to death in the age to come.

In **Philippians 4:6**, Paul exhorts believers to pray about their circumstances instead of worrying over them. We are to commit our problems to God in prayer, trusting that He will provide deliverance.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We should give thanks every day to our Lord, as our Creator, our Savior and our Deliverer. The prayer of thanksgiving and praise that we give to the Lord avails much. His love, promise, mercy and grace are reasons why we are to continually give thanks and praise. We are to leave our worries behind and put our trust in the Lord, as only He can provide true peace, a peace that will guard our hearts and minds (soul) through the Spirit of Christ Jesus, Who is in us.

We see a comparison Scripture to **Philippians 4:6** in **Colossians 4:2**, with the addition that a door of opportunity be given to minister the Word of the kingdom to other believers:

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2-4)

We must be diligent and faithful in prayer every day, so that our communication and our relationship with God will grow. Moreover, we will move from faith to faith and from glory to glory.

...continuing steadfastly in prayer... (Romans 12:12c)

...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints... (Ephesians 6:18)

It is then imperative that we remain diligent in our prayers toward abiding in the Word, which is life, and remaining focused daily to its connection to the coming Kingdom, for this is our motivation which will prevent us from hardening our hearts. The context for our prayer here then is the urgency that we feel in being prepared for meeting our Lord at His

Judgment Seat and the passion we have to be found worthy.

Talk to God every day through prayer. The prayers of the saints (faithful believers) reach the throne of God in heaven and God will redeem them and make them kings and priests to Him; and they shall reign on the earth and over the earth.

The following passage is a recommended prayer extracted from **Colossians 1:9-12**:

Father God, I ask that I may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I may walk worthy of You, fully pleasing You, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in Your knowledge; strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to You, Father, who has qualified me to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in the light and has conveyed me into the kingdom of the Son of Your love, in whom I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

CHAPTER SEVEN – PART TWO

HEARERS OF THE WORD

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
(Romans 10:17)*

Transforming ourselves into the image of Christ will involve hearing His Word and opening our eyes to the understanding of what He requires of us. By and through the study of His Word, we will know what we are to do and why. And through this process, our faith will grow. We will then move from faith to faith, thereby being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as we see in **2 Corinthians 3:18**:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

True Scriptural faith is believing every word that God says about a matter. When we live by faith (the faith), our faith will grow from one level of faith to another level of faith, then shall we be transformed from glory to glory. The final part of the transformation process happens at the Judgment seat of Christ, where those who have progressed from faith to faith and from glory to glory will receive glorified bodies and positions of rulership in the Messianic Era.

The previous Scripture of **2 Corinthians 3:18** is referring to the event that occurred with Moses and the nation of Israel. Moses puts on a veil in order to cover the brightness of the glory upon his face as a result of his meeting with the Lord on Mount Sinai. He puts on the veil because the people of Israel were afraid and desired not to look upon the glory. This event takes place after Israel's idol worship of the golden calf and after Moses returns from receiving the Ten Commandments.

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of

Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him. (Exodus 34:29-35)

The people of Israel did not desire to look upon the glory of Moses or to hear his message unless he placed a veil over his face. This event was an example depicting the condition of Israel, even today, as they remain in a blinded state of unbelief. And this example was written for our admonition, as the Church is no different today. The Church, as a whole, is also blinded to God's Word. Many have no desire to seek the Truth, the understanding of the Word of the kingdom. We can, if not careful, allow the truth of Scripture to become veiled in darkness as our hearts are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, thus giving place to the devil.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4)

We see further commentary on this with Israel in **2 Corinthians 3:14-18**:

But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

When the splendor of Moses' face was so great that the people of Israel could not bear to look upon his face, the people requested him to veil it. Even after Moses, the people of Israel continued to be blinded by the truth and did not have the discernment to understand what the Mosaic covenant pointed to. Even now in the reading of the Old Testament Scriptures a veil lays over it, and their blindness and state of unbelief continues to reflect the condition of their heart. The veil that was on the face of Moses,

who was a type of Christ, prevented the glory of his face from shining out and is a representation of the darkness, ignorance and hardness of their hearts. And because the veil over their hearts stop the glory from shining out, this will also hinder the Word of the kingdom, the Gospel of the glories of Christ from shining in and being received. And this event was written as an example to Christians.

The veiled condition of the Church can be seen in the Parable of the Sower, **Matthew 13:18-23**, as Christ reveals the different types of Christians and how they either receive or reject the Word of the kingdom whenever they hear it. And this was due to the tares that were placed in the Church by Satan in order to corrupt the Word, specifically the Word of the kingdom.

But Christians have been placed in a position where they could ultimately be brought into a realization of the salvation of their souls through following that which is outlined in **James 1:21**:

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.

A Christian is to receive the Word only after he has set aside the things which would hinder the reception of this Word. One obstruction, *filthiness*, which is a dulled spiritual desire and perception, would prevent the Word of God from being properly understood. Another obstruction would be pride and a hardness of heart. Jesus ministered that the only way that one can enter the kingdom of heaven would be to put away pride and become as a child, as children are meek and have teachable spirits.

But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Luke 18:16, 17)

...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby unto (soul) salvation... (1 Peter 2:2)

After a Christian has removed any obstructions which could prevent him from hearing the Word of God properly, he is to put away all *wickedness* or impurity in his life that could also hinder the reception of the Word of God. Once this is done, a Christian is able to receive the Word unto spiritual maturity, which, when put into practice, will ultimately result in

the salvation of his soul. Not only is he called to receive the Word properly, but to receive the “*implanted*” Word. This Word is to be *firmly fixed within a believer’s mind*. This process over time will lead the Christian to move from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity. And, an understanding of the Word of the kingdom is the key that will open the believer’s eyes to the understanding of the Word of God.

As for the Gentiles (unsaved), their blindness and unbelief of our Lord and Savior keeps them far away from spirit salvation. But for Christians who are spiritually saved and therefore should be in pursuit of the kingdom, their blindness is not with regards to eternal salvation, but with regards to not believing that which God has spoken through the Word concerning soul salvation, the salvation that remains yet future.

Therefore, the example of Israel’s disobedience and unbelief that we find in the Book of **Hebrews** is the subject of warning to Christians concerning their unbelief with regards to soul salvation.

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it...

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 3:16-4:2, 11-13)

God first committed His Word to His firstborn sons, Israel, an eternally saved people. But, the nation as a whole did not take the hearing of the

Word seriously and did not put their faith in it. Rather, they desired the things of this world by which they were deceived, causing their hearts to be dull and blinded, choosing to live in unbelief to that which God had said. How does this pertain to Christians?

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them.
(Hebrews 4:2)

The warnings are exactly the same for Christians. If we choose to keep the Word of God far away from us, choosing instead the desires of this world, then we choose to live in unbelief to that which God has said. If we choose not to hear the Scriptures, we cannot know the truth and then allow this truth to change our way of living to that which pleases God. This will lead to the same exact consequence as it was with the Israelites, who because of unbelief and disobedience *would not enter His rest*. Instead, *their corpses fell in the wilderness*. Christians, therefore, who do not hear, read and study God's word will not know His ways and cannot please Him, so they also *will not enter His rest*.

It is through our proper engagement with the Word of God, which keeps our focus on the Seventh Day that we can be renewed in the *spirit* of our mind and thereby be transformed, so that we can be able to enter His rest. It is only by aligning our mind, our thinking, with that which God has said can we know and do His will. And in this, we exercise faith. We cannot exercise true faith in God if we do not study His Word, for *faith is believing everything that God says in His word*. Therefore, the study of the Word and exercising faith in God go hand in hand.

An example of this very thing can be seen in **Colossians 2:6**,

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught [through the study of His Word], abounding in it with thanksgiving.

In this we understand that God, in His infinite wisdom, has provided everything through the power of His Word and through the Holy Spirit necessary for us to be successful in our race of the faith.

...His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue... (2 Peter 1:3)

God's purpose for His Word is to give us the knowledge of the whole

gospel of Christ to include the gospel of glory, so that we are able to *work out our own salvation* for the saving of our souls.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

This particular *knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* is vitally important for the saving of our lives in the age to come. This is the reason why Paul constantly prayed that the Church would receive one of the greatest strengths our inner man can possess — the knowledge and wisdom of the glory of God.

...making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Ephesians 1:16-18)

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Colossians 1:9)

In the Books of **Psalms**, **Proverbs** and **Ecclesiastes**, mostly written by King David and his son, Solomon, there is a great deal of importance placed in gaining wisdom and understanding of God's Word. When God granted a gift to Solomon, Solomon's only request was that God would impart wisdom to him. God was pleased with Solomon's request and He answered his prayer (**1 Kings 3:3**). It was through the knowledge of God that King Solomon was able to understand how to rule effectively. Solomon understood God's will and purpose for his life. He also understood that when fools despise wisdom, they must face the consequence of their choice. Their hatred for wisdom arises out of a refusal to know and obey God; therefore rejection of God's wisdom is a rejection of God Himself, which will ultimately destroy them. This dismal warning in **Proverbs 1:20-33** ends with a promise of life in the age to come to the few who will listen and obey; they will find ease and safety inside the gates of the kingdom.

When we pray for God's wisdom and understanding of His Word, He is faithful to give it. Unfortunately, many Christians do not pray and seek to know Him through the study of His Word. Instead, a majority rely *strictly*

on man to teach them through philosophy and empty deceit. We cannot rely on the wisdom and traditions of man to teach us the truth and wisdom of God.

...that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God...Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:5, 11b-13)

The Word of God is living and powerful (**Hebrews 4:12**). Four reasons why the Bible is alive and powerful:

- 1) The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Word is Jesus Christ, Who is alive and powerful.
- 2) The Word was written by holy men who were moved to write by the Holy Spirit, Who is alive and powerful.
- 3) Past, present and future events written in the Word are true and live events. These events are unfolding every day.
- 4) Everyone will be judged by everything that is written in the Word. Therefore, the Word is a powerful judge.

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Word teaches *all* things pertaining to God. However, there is something that is often misunderstood. In **1 John 2:27**, we read:

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John was speaking to those who *knew* the Truth and were being led by the Holy Spirit. And the context to which he is warning them concerns “*those who try to deceive you*”—false teachers.

John is not saying that man cannot teach Scripture for *He Himself gave some to be....pastors and teachers... till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God... that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of*

doctrine, by the trickery of men... (**Ephesians 4:11-14**)

God has given some to be pastor-teachers to deliver the Word of God. However, we must allow the Spirit to lead, giving us the understanding, wisdom and discernment of the message that is being delivered. Simply put, the Word comes *by* man and *through* the Spirit.

It is our responsibility to abide in the Word and allow the Spirit to teach us. When we are mature in the Word, we are able to discern whether one is speaking the Truth or not. We are to test the spirits, whether they are of God, for there are many false teachers today speaking “great swelling words” of things which they do not know, telling lies of hypocrisy, teaching falsely the Word of God and deceiving many immature Christians.

And those who are indolent, having no desire to study the Word, will be unable to discern truth from false messages. All they know is the milk message of the Word. If they hear the deeper truths or the meat message, they will be unable to understand and therefore quick to reject it. The deeper truths is not the common or popular message spoken today, and this is why it is quickly rejected, even though it is the truth of God’s Word. On the contrary, immature Christians are easily swayed to receive false doctrine.

Hebrews 5:12-14 speaks of the immature Christian:

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The writer of Hebrews was addressing a group of Christians who at one time had been advancing towards spiritual maturity, but who had regressed through the deceitfulness of unbelief to the point of being spiritually immature once again and were not capable of handling anything but milk. The writer then encourages them to abandon the “elementary principles” of Christ and move on to maturity again. However, the writer’s exhortation to go on to maturity is conditional — based on “*if God permits*” us to go on.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of

Christ, let us go on to perfection...And this we will do if God permits. (Hebrews 6:1-3)

The writer leaves us with the indication that God may not permit some Christians to move on to maturity, that is, to the understanding of the Word of the kingdom. The reason why is given in the verses immediately following:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

By falling away, the Christian would be forfeiting his inheritance. He would be back within a world ruled under Satan and by doing so, would bring shame upon Christ and His name. This act would result in dire consequence. And though the Christian may later change his mind about the matter, God will not change *His mind*. The Christian will surely be cut off and will be given the same measure in which he cut off Christ, bringing shame and reproach upon His name. Scripture identifies the act of falling away as if one is “*crucifying the Son of God to himself*.” There will be no room for repentance and no second chances (**Hebrews 7:27**).

The heavenly inheritance is no small matter and should never be taken lightly. God has called us to be partakers of a future heavenly inheritance with Christ. The key to acquiring this inheritance is “faith,” and *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17)*. God’s Word is able to bring about the “metamorphosis,” the transformation from the “old man” to the “new man in Christ.”

The beginning points for coming to an understanding of the Word of God are quite simple. First, the individual must understand that God’s Word not only reveals God’s plan and purpose for man but also that which is able to build a person up and give him an inheritance within an age toward which all things move — the coming Messianic Era. Then, in order for the person to qualify for the inheritance, he must believe God and govern his life accordingly. Teachings drawn from the opening two chapters of **Genesis** form the key to correctly understanding the Word of God. If one understands these opening verses correctly, he will understand how God has structured his revelation to man, allowing him to understand the rest of the Scriptures. One must understand what is revealed at the beginning

first. The opening verses of **Genesis** deals with four keys points as the basis or foundation for which the entirety of Scripture rests:

- 1) Creation (**Genesis 1:1**)
- 2) Ruin of the Creation (**Genesis 1:2a**)
- 3) Restoration of the Creation (**Genesis 1:2b-25**)
- 4) Rest (**Genesis 2b-2:3**)

The central theme of Scripture is the message of *redemption*. These four key points provide the foundational structure upon which the entirety of Scripture is built. God took six days to restore the ruined material creation, and then God rested on the seventh day. In the antitype, each day is one thousand years in length. This would amount to six thousand years of the restoration of man followed by one thousand years of rest.

And this covers the entirety of God's revelation to man. A person must follow this skeletal structure and build upon this structure after the manner in which God began. Then, God in His Word draws not so much from history per se as He does from the spiritual content set forth in the historical accounts — *the spiritual lessons behind the events*, taught mainly from *types* pointing to corresponding *antitypes*. Anyone can understand facts within revealed Biblical history (the letter of Scripture). But only saved man (one who has the indwelling Holy Spirit) can go beyond the letter to the spirit of Scripture. Only the one possessing the Holy Spirit can look within Biblical history and see spiritual content (**1 Corinthians 2:12-16**). This is what is meant by “*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.” It is within this facet of Scripture that one can know the “*deep things of God*” (**1 Corinthians 2:9-13**). When viewing Scripture after this fashion, one will come to realize that the central Person presented throughout Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must search the Word for understanding, comparing Scripture with Scripture, “*here a little, there a little*.” (**Isaiah 28:10**). By studying the types in the Old Testament we can better understand the unveiling of the New Testament. We must allow the Holy Spirit to teach us all things and guide us into all truth, so that we will be complete, able to know and do the will of God.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly

equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

We must always seek the truth from Scripture, exhorting and teaching one another — *For what does the Scripture say? (Romans 4:3)*. For since the foundation of the world, God has made known His word throughout the whole earth --- through those He has entrusted to preach His gospel, even Noah, *a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5)*, who lived nine hundred and fifty years and before him, Enoch, a man who walked with God for three hundred years and preached His word to all (**Jude 14**).

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:14, 15)

The gospel was preached from the beginning, but not all believed. Rather, many chose to believe a false report.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.” (Romans 10:16-18)

In **Colossians 3:16**, Paul admonishes the Church to seek the Word unto maturity:

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.

The companion Scripture to **Colossians 3:16** is found in **Ephesians 5:17**:

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord...

“Being filled with the Spirit” is equivalent to “letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom.” The phrase “the word of Christ” concerns the whole counsel of God, which has to do with Christ and His coming kingdom — a revelation that only comes from heaven above as the indwelling Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and guides us into all Truth.

The Word of God is a Book of prophecy, and all of what is written has been and will be fulfilled at the precise time that God wills. And the end is near; the prophecy of Christ’s return and His future reign is soon to be fulfilled. His return as King of kings is revealed in the prophetic Scriptures. His love and peace is the song of our hearts. Our hope is in the Blessed Hope of His return for which we earnestly long. Each one of us must choose between Truth or error, the broad path or the narrow way, life or death.

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

We must set aside time every day to open the Scriptures, seeking the Word as treasure, exhorting and teaching one another, and allowing the Spirit of the Lord to lead us unto the salvation of our soul. We must be hearers of His Word. As always, the choice is ours.

CHAPTER SEVEN – PART THREE

DOERS OF THE WORD

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

To be a *doer of the Word* we must put into practice all that we have heard and studied from the Word of God. We can deceive ourselves into believing that we need only to hear the Word, but not abide in it. We can be deceived into thinking that because we have the knowledge of the Word this completes our faith, and we do not need to obey or be a doer of the Word. But Scripture says otherwise. And though we should mature in the knowledge of the Word of the kingdom, this alone is not enough for us to be found worthy at the Judgment Seat of Christ on that Day. We must take the commands of Christ, from the Word of God, and apply them to our day to day experiences — this we must do until the end.

Pertaining to the salvation of the soul, *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only (James 2:24), and Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:17).* Faith and works go hand in hand, producing *faithful obedience*. When we act by faith, we put aside our fleshly desires and our way of thinking, and we allow the Spirit of the Lord to perform a work through us. It is the Spirit who does the work, but we must first *choose* to allow the Spirit to do the work. Works of the flesh produce no profit, only works done in the Spirit.

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”(John 6:63)

In **Acts 1:4**, we see that the Spirit of the Lord was working through the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, as they began to speak in other tongues [*languages*] to the multitudes that gathered together.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Those who came from faraway lands to Jerusalem were astonished because they knew this was most unlikely unless the disciples had come from their own land and thereby knew their language. Although these signs were empowered to the disciples strictly for Israel and only during the time of the offer and reoffer of the kingdom, this event reveals that when we allow the Spirit to take control, He is able to do good works through us. We are to *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12b, 13).*

God created man in His image and in His likeness. However, after the fall of Adam, all those procreated from Adam onwards are in Adam's likeness, no longer in the likeness of God. We see this in **Genesis 5:3**, *And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

All individuals are born with an unredeemed spirit (...even when we were dead in trespasses... **Ephesians 2:5**, we ...*must be born again* **John 3:7**). All have unredeemed souls (...*the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...* **Ephesians 4:22**). And, all have an unredeemed body apart from the glory (*Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* **Romans 8:23**). But because of God's love, He has set in place through the death and resurrection of His Son, everything that is necessary for the redemption of all three parts of man's being. We begin with the free gift of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, that God sent to man after Christ ascended to heaven. Although the free gift of eternal life [no works involved because Christ did the work and paid the price] has completely and irrevocably redeemed our spirit, our soul and body remains unredeemed [requiring good works according to the power of the Holy Spirit for Millennial life].

In **Ephesians 2:8-10**, Paul lays out for us the division of the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. [Salvation of the Spirit]

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. [Salvation of the Soul]

At the Judgment seat of Christ, works done in the body, whether good or bad, will be judged. If our works are found worthy, this will lead to the salvation of our souls, to redeemed, glorified bodies, and entrance into the kingdom with positions of rulership with Christ for 1000 years.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Therefore, the basis for all judgment in Scripture is “works.” God judged sin at Calvary on the basis of His Son’s finished work (**John 19:30**). Christians will be judged at the end of this present dispensation on the basis of works (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15**). Israel will be judged following the Tribulation on the basis of works (**Ezekiel 20:34-38; Revelation 16:15**). Saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation will be judged on the basis of works (**Matthew 25:31**); and the unsaved will also be judged following the Millennium on the basis of works (**Revelation 20:11-15**). This will be the working out of God’s plans and purposes for all three creations – Jew, Gentile, and Christian -- having to do with the 7th Day.

On that Day our works will be judged as to whether we were “doers of the Word.” There are numerous types, antitypes and examples given in the Old Testament and the New Testament teaching and warning Christians of a future judgment so that they may be prepared. These examples present a word-picture of the Judgment seat of Christ where believer’s works, emanating out of faithfulness and also out of unfaithfulness, will be tested. These two types of works (good and bad; faithful and unfaithful) are depicted by “*gold, silver, precious stones,*” emanating out of faithfulness, that which will pass through the fire unharmed and “*wood, hay, straw,*” emanating out of unfaithfulness, that which will be consumed by the fire. We see this in **1 Corinthians 3:9-15**:

For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other

foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Individuals shown to have possessed works described by *gold, silver, and precious stones* will experience the salvation of their souls, which will allow them to take part in Christ's millennial reign. However, those individuals shown to have possessed works described by *wood, hay, and straw* will suffer loss and will experience the loss of their souls, being cast out of Christ's kingdom — though they will be *saved* [their eternal salvation unaffected].

Maturity in the faith, being completely obedient to God's Word, is a lifelong process. In the Old Testament, we have the example of faithful obedience in the life of Abraham. God called Abraham to leave his country and go to a foreign place, which he did, but not according to God's instructions. Abraham made many mistakes and had much to learn about how the Lord works patient endurance. But God continued to work in Abraham's life until he had been brought to maturity, to the place of absolute faithful obedience to the Lord. It took approximately sixty years after Abraham left his country Ur for him to be ready to undergo the ultimate test of his faith. At this time, God instructed Abraham to go to a certain place to offer his son for a burnt offering (**Genesis 22:1**). By faith, Abraham set out to do exactly that which God commanded, having no hesitation or objection. Abraham had complete faith in God, knowing that his child belonged to the Lord and if it was His will that the boy be sacrificed, God would raise him up again. Abraham knew and fully trusted God. This trust brought about a mature state of patient endurance and faithful obedience. And because of this, God accepted as a replacement a substitute lamb as the sacrifice.

Likewise, Christians today are to be brought into a mature state through the same process. And like Abraham, failure at obeying God's exact

commands may occur many times until one is ready to be faithfully obedient through trials and testing.

Another example of good and faithful works can be seen in the Book of **Ruth**. Ruth, a type of the Church (specifically the bride of Christ), is pictured with her sister-in-law, Orpah, becoming members of a Jewish family by marriage (a picture of their birth from above). Christians also become part of a Jewish family as a result of Jesus Christ, being made alive in the Spirit.

After their husbands died, Ruth and Orpah chose to journey to another land with their mother-in-law, Naomi. It is at this point in time that Ruth is made aware of her future goal — the land of her calling. Naomi, who is a type of the nation of Israel, also represents that which has come through the nation -- the Scriptures. During the journey, Naomi suggests to her daughters-in-laws to go back to their homes in Moab as she can no longer provide husbands for them. Christians at this point in their journey must make the choice to either endure trials and sufferings or turn back to the world. Ruth continued the journey to the end, but Orpah chose to turn back. Ruth is determined to follow Naomi and be faithfully obedient to all that she said:

*...Ruth clung to her [Naomi]. **Ruth 1:14b***

*Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. **(Ruth 1:16)***

*And she said to her [Naomi], “All that you say to me I will do.” **(Ruth 3:5)***

Likewise, Christians must have a proper understanding of the goal, knowing the reason as to why they are laboring to accomplish that goal. Then, they are to run the race of the faith, the journey from the land of one's birth to the land of one's calling — the heavenly Millennial kingdom. Through the course of her journey, Ruth was determined to abide in Naomi's instructions, working in the field and preparing herself to meet Boaz, a type of Christ, at his threshing floor. Ruth was faithful in all that Naomi said until the end of barley harvest. This resulted in Ruth being prepared at Boaz's threshing floor, a type of the Judgment seat of Christ, and thereby becoming the wife of Boaz.

Christians are called to make the same journey to the heavenly land. In

order to be prepared to meet Christ at His judgment seat, it will take the determination to cling to the Scriptures and follow His instructions to the end. All that God has commanded in His Word prepares Christians to meet Christ on that future Day and to be found worthy as His bride. However, many Christians will choose to be like Orpah, choosing not to heed the Scriptures and journey to the end. Like Orpah, many Christians will choose to go back to their carnal state and back to the world. There are three reasons why Christians tend to fall back from journeying to the land of their calling and that is due to: 1) the lust of the flesh, 2) the world and 3) the devil.

In the Gospel of **Matthew** we have examples of four types of Christians, while only one type endures unto maturity after hearing the Word of the kingdom. The others fall back due to the reasons mentioned above. This can be seen in the Parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13**. But Christians, who do hear the Word of the kingdom and endure, are the ones who bear fruit; and some more than others.

“But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23)

The Parable of the Talents in **Matthew 25:14** and the Parable of the Minus in **Luke 19:11** creates a vivid word-picture of the Judgment seat of Christ, where Christians will one day stand before the Lord to give an account of all their works done in the body. In these parables we see that Christ had ascended to heaven *to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (Luke 19:12)*. In the meantime, He has *called his own servants and delivered his goods to them (Matthew 25:14) and said to them, ‘Do business till I come’ (Luke 19:13)*. These goods that Christ sent are 1) the gift of the Holy Spirit, 2) the Scriptures and 3) talents — to each according to one’s ability.

Upon placing belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, one was given all of these goods mentioned. It is the believer’s choice at this point whether he will ‘*Do business till I come*’ by seeking the Scriptures and using the talents he has been given to produce good works, works done according to the Spirit. Part of these works involves dying to the flesh and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us. These works we must continually do until the end. If we do, we will be transformed from the “old man” to the “new man,” able to produce fruit for the building of the kingdom. Our business, as stewards of the Word of the kingdom, is to spread this

message to other believers.

When one is producing fruit and proclaiming the Word of the kingdom to others, Satan will be there attempting to destroy the Word and bring about division and persecution. For this reason, one must have on the whole armor of God. He must withstand the temptations of the devil by the Word of God. He will surely fail to produce good works and overcome if he is not strong in the Lord.

Our actions and our speech should be determined by our faithfulness to the Word of God. They are not to be determined by our present circumstances or by our own fleshly desires.

All that we do or say matters, whether in secret or openly. Solomon, the wisest man in the world, warned us about the importance of producing good works and keeping God's commandments:

Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13a, 14)

The works of the flesh produce evil thoughts and deeds. When we walk in the flesh, we are producing the works of Satan; we are of the devil. In **Galatians 5:19**, we are made aware that believers who practice such things (the works of the flesh) will not inherit the kingdom of God. Only believers who produce the fruit of the Spirit will be able to inherit the kingdom. *And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).*

Our faithful obedience, our good works, will show as we strive to be imitators of Christ: holy, humble, set apart from the world, being a good steward of the whole gospel of Christ, obeying His commandments, loving God and all man. This is having the fruit of the Spirit. It is loving others and considering others better than ourselves, not expecting anything in return. It is being joyful in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in, whether blessings or trials. It is separating ourselves from the world, what it thinks and does that is contrary to God, even if it means suffering for it. It means being submissive to those who lead over us, whether law, government, bosses, husbands, or parents — whether they are gentle or harsh. It means always portraying a spirit of gentleness, humility, and self-control, especially when someone else is evil towards us. It means keeping peace amongst our brother and not stirring up divisive contentions. It means spreading the Truth and building the kingdom. It

means praying to the Lord constantly and hoping for His return. It means knowing Him through His Word. This is part of our journey, our race of the faith. This is what it takes to be an overcomer — to hear the words,

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Matthew 25:21)

On that Day, the Church will stand before Christ at His judgment seat and hear the words, *“I know your works...”* It will be our present works which will be at the forefront of Christ’s judgment.

The fear of the Lord and the hope of reward will motivate one to do good works and persevere. It will motivate one to be transformed into the very likeness of Him. And through Christ, everyone can change. We can realize this with Paul and his ministry, which required a complete turnaround from the direction his life was heading. If the one who persecuted the Church could be so radically changed by the power of God through the Holy Spirit, then the same power is able to work in us to bring about radical changes in us. And those who knew Paul as a persecutor saw this great change in him:

Then all who heard were amazed, and said “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?” But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. (Acts 9:21, 22)

God’s grace was bestowed upon Paul so that he *should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...and that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:8; Colossians 1:28).*

Therefore, it is by the grace of God and the faith of the believer that any aspect of salvation is possessed, whether the salvation of the spirit, salvation of the soul or the salvation of the body. It is first by God’s grace, His favor (*that which God is able to do entirely apart from human intervention*) that we can be able to act by faith (*believing that which God has to say about a matter*).

As a believer, *you have been saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).* This act was due to the past work of Christ’s death on the Cross and our faith in Christ. Now a continuing work of grace must be involved (the

spirit of Christ working through us) along with our faith in order to possess the salvation of our soul, resulting in the salvation of the body at the Judgment seat of Christ. If we choose to commit ourselves to the Lord and be faithful, God will be graceful to do His works through us. It is these works of God that will save us in the very near future. We must be *doers of the Word*.

CHAPTER SEVEN – PART FOUR

GOD’S DAILY PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY

There is a better way to live. The Word of God provides all the instructions necessary to live a life worthy of entering the coming kingdom. Our Lord is offering innumerable riches in the heavenly kingdom and in order to qualify, one must hear His voice and live His way. The gift of the understanding of His message is the greatest gift one could possibly receive in his lifetime. It is able to give one hope during his life, regardless of the circumstances around him. This new hope of a future life with Him is a powerful asset to possess. One of the most important secrets of life, that which Satan has done so well to conceal, is this “Blessed Hope.” With this hope, one can run the race of faith and overcome his life. Each of the following daily principles to live by will help us to overcome. By allowing the Holy Spirit to perform these works through us, we will learn to get rid of the “old man” and replace it with the “new man in Christ.” This is the key to a better life of purpose and a promising future.

Daily Principle #1)

Know Him through His Word. Open the Scriptures every day with the motivation to learn something new. And don’t just read the Word, study it. Begin with the foundation in **Genesis**, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. Consider the seeking of the Word as seeking gold or some other great treasure. Consider it as the most important thing you do throughout your day. When your passion for knowledge has come, He will make you *wise for salvation* and ready to *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. Don’t ever think it is too late. If you knock, God is ready to reach out and open the door.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
(**Matthew 7:7, 8**)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

Only through the understanding and wisdom of His Word can you truly know your purpose in Him and His plan for you. Seek His wisdom every day!

Daily Principle #2)

Pray without ceasing. Pray constantly with thanksgiving, when granted blessings or when under trials. Pray throughout the day when you are alone. Your prayers to the Lord are your communication with Him. Your thoughts are communicated through prayer. Give it all to the Lord for He hears you. It could be short prayers to praise Him for all that He has done. It could be a prayer for others in need, who are sick or lacking the desire to know the Lord. The breath (Holy Spirit) of God will guide you in your prayers if you are not sure what to pray for. But continue earnestly in prayer. Your requests to God are known by Him even before you ask Him and He is faithful to always answer. He may not answer according to your will, but according to His will and always for our good whether we realize or not. And set your life according to God so that your prayers may not be hindered (**1 Peter 3:8**). Daniel's works were pleasing to the Lord, and therefore, the Lord answered his prayer even before his request was made known (**Daniel 9**). God knows what you need even before you ask — we need to be fervent in our walk, always seeking the kingdom *first*. Prayer keeps our relationship with Him strong and it is our way of leaning on Him when we are weak. Let us today practice constant prayer, *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)*.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6, 7)

Daily Principle #3)

Count your blessings, knowing that *every* good gift comes from above (**James 1:17**). Rejoice in them and give thanks to the Lord. And know that *blessings are on the head of the righteous* (**Proverbs 10:6**). If we are continually living righteously and faithfully, we will receive greater blessings in the kingdom.

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (**James 1:25**)

The Scripture in **James 1:25** express future blessings, that which involves the promise of an inheritance in the Messianic Era. There are also blessings received during our life that we may be unaware of or do not take into consideration, blessings such as the hope that God gave us for our future or the peace and protection of God. There are times when God provided miracles in our lives, and it is because of His continual work in us combined with our faithful obedience that we are blessed.

Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—just as Abraham “believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” (**Galatians 3:5, 6**)

Therefore, our faithfulness determines the blessings we will receive. Let us also consider that the present blessings are nothing compared to the blessings that await us in the future. The blessings now are short-lived but future blessings are eternal. And let us also realize that our days here on earth are numbered and with it comes blessings and suffering.

In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him. (**Ecclesiastes 7:14**)

In both circumstances, God is allowing our faith to be tested, as each person’s soul-life will be reviewed by God after death (or rapture). Therefore, our faithfulness or unfaithfulness during blessings and suffering will be determined at the Judgment seat of Christ. Thank the Lord always for His work in you.

Daily Principle #4)

Be joyful during trials. Trials and suffering come into everyone's life as a test of their faith. You may wonder, "How can I be joyful during trials?" We can be joyful knowing that God has given us another opportunity to trust in Him and endure, so that we can reap in the kingdom to come. We can be joyful because if we remain faithful, God will be with us during these trials and see us through them. If we lean on Him, He will make us strong and help us to find a way of escape. We can be joyful because God is preparing us to be rulers in His future kingdom. Focus on this when adversity comes. Christ had to suffer as a humble Servant of God before He could reap the rewards of reigning in the kingdom. Likewise, Christians are called to suffer in this world (age) until the end so that we also can reap the rewards in the future. It is during trials and suffering that we mature. God is teaching us valuable lessons and molding us into the type of person we ought to be. Trials produce patience — a characteristic of standing fast under pressure, of leaning on God's power that turns adversity into opportunity. It is usually during these times of suffering that God is telling us to *humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you* (1 Peter 5:6). The next time trials come your way, stop and remember the hope that is in you before reacting according to your old self. Trust in the Lord and believe that He will see you through them all. Rejoice when trials come!

Daily Principle #5)

Today, and every day, count others better than yourself.

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Treat everyone you meet, friend or foe, loved one or stranger, with kindness, care, and love. Do this with no thought of anything in return. Your life will never be the same again. *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (Leviticus 19:18b) Who is our neighbor? Our neighbors are those who are like-minded in the faith. We are to love them as we love ourselves. Then Jesus gave a new commandment:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:34, 35)

Not only are we to love other Christians of like-mind as we love ourselves, but we are to love them just as Christ loves us. Continue daily in this practice of loving unconditionally, for in doing so your transformation will blossom and you will put on the very image of Christ. Others will recognize you as a follower of Christ when you act in this way. Speak evil of no one, especially your brother in the faith (**James 4:11, 12**). You can hate the sin, but not the sinner. It is not our part to condemn, for God will be the One to judge. And just as we are to love, pray for and do good to our neighbors, this also includes our enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**). Even if our enemies persecute, curse and hate us, continue to pray for them. This is not a suggestion, but a commandment from God. If you abide in this, you will be a firstborn son of God, complete and worthy of future heavenly rewards. Love strangers and acquaintances. Be compassionate and generous toward the needy. Love everyone and do good to all, *especially* to those who are like-minded in the faith (**Galatians 6:10**).

Daily Principle #6)

Live holy and set apart from the world. Practice, Practice, Practice to live righteously, according to the glorious gospel of the Almighty God. When you know the Truth and desire to be saved into the kingdom, you will want to please God and want nothing to do with what the world desires. You must walk worthy of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work. This will involve putting the flesh to death on a daily basis. It will involve making choices to walk according to the Spirit. Your “old man” in you will want to continue to do bad works, whether it is telling a lie or speaking evil of someone or being mindful of earthly things. You must remember what you have been taught by the Spirit and have the courage to put down the “old man” and put on the “new man” according to the Spirit.

When you have passion for Christ and the kingdom, you will be able to transform yourself with the help of the Spirit. But the difficult part will be fighting against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. These evil forces of Satan will do everything in their power to bring you

down and keep you from winning the race of the faith. You must be strong in the Lord in order to fight them and win. You must put on the whole armor of God and keep it on at all times (**Ephesians 6:10**). Do not be deceived by them or by the world and all its lusts. Keep far away from them by staying closer to the Lord and your brothers and sisters of the faith. Be holy and overcome.

Daily Principle #7)

If you make a mistake or feel weary, ask God to forgive you and give you strength to overcome. Then be rest assured that He has forgiven you. Your capacity to sin will always be there lingering as we all have a sin nature. But that should never keep you from your ability to overcome and reach your goal. Never quit — your reward will come. Do not let the evil voices of Satan tell you that you have failed. God has given us numerous examples in Scripture of men that sinned but then overcame their sin nature. You too can overcome. We are all sinners and all fall short of the glory of God. But through His grace and mercy, God has given us His Son as our High Priest to be Mediator for us. If we confess our sin and practice putting sin away, we will be victorious in our race. By confessing sin to the Lord, *He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (**1 John 1:9**). He will wipe it away, never to bring it up again. But if we do not confess it, then the sin will remain with us until judgment and we will continue in sin as well.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (**1 John 1:10**)

A sinful person who denies committing sinful acts does not have the Word of God changing his life. We must be aware of the ever-present danger of habitual and continual sin. We must be on guard against sinful tendencies, for if we do not confess it and put it away, we will surely perish in the age to come.

Instead of habitual sin, abide in habitual obedience to God's Word. Stop yourself when tempted to sin. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you can choose not to sin. You can choose to be transformed. If you are feeling weak or weary, you must plant yourself back into the Word, for there God will revive you and give you strength. Do not allow the world to draw you away from your focus and your path. Stay away from those

who entice you to sin, for they live for the world and all its lusts and evilness. Never stop trying to be like Him. Never quit.

Daily Principle #8)

Practice to listen more and speak less. When you do speak, let your words always be kind, gentle, humble, truthful and loving. And when there is an open door of opportunity to tell someone about the hope that is in you, the Spirit of the Lord will speak through you. The tongue is an unruly evil, out of it comes blessing and cursing and this should not be so. From now on, do not say a word unless it is good. You will find that by saying nothing in a conversation filled with cursing and condemnation, you will not have to be ashamed later or have any regrets. You will find that by remaining silent at times or only speaking good, your transformation will appeal and be known by others.

Daily Principle #9)

Let your works align with the Word of God. Once you have been transformed into the “new man in Christ,” holy and acceptable to God, and have the knowledge of the glories of Christ, you are to be an ambassador of God. Your service to Him is to spread the knowledge that He has given you to build His kingdom. You must allow the Holy Spirit to do these works through you. You must build this day on the foundation of Jesus Christ with works of gold, silver and precious stones. To everyone God has given special gifts to use for His glory. Do not leave the Spirit in you dormant. There will be times when God will supply the grain and will place an open door of opportunity for you to minister to someone in front of you. It is at this point when you must be faithful to allow the Spirit to do good works. Always remember that you are a representative of Christ and must always speak the Truth of the Word. Your actions and your words are vitally important. Choose them wisely and you will not be ashamed. Your works will be tried by fire at the Judgment seat of Christ on that Day and will determine whether you will be found worthy to be His bride.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own

understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

Daily Principle #10)

Focus this day and every day on the “Blessed Hope.” When you earnestly hope for His return and for the hope of glory, you will strive to win the race of the faith. No greater expectation can we possess than this — to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens! Remember that we were saved by the blood of Christ in this hope and therefore we should eagerly wait for that Day with perseverance. Be mindful of the things of God and His kingdom and not on the things of man and of this world. Put on this hope of salvation when you wake up in the morning and continue to focus on it throughout the day. Christ gave Himself for us to give us this hope of salvation, and to redeem us from every sinful deed.

We are His own special people if we reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)*. This hope will give you the motivation to produce good works and to endure till the end. Christ is our Hope. Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!

Daily Principle #11)

Walk by faith, not by sight. Believe everything God says in His Word and fully trust in Him. Be faithfully obedient to all His commands, for in doing so you will save your soul in the age to come. Forget yesterday’s defeats, when you lived your life in sin and lust. Do not worry about problems of the past or that which may come tomorrow.

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13a, 14)

Live this day as if it will be your last. Today is the last chance you get to live for Christ. Consider this day a special gift from God, a day to live as you are called. And you know that we are all called in one hope, in one

baptism, in one Lord, in one faith — so live by faith in Christ. Remember that *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (**Hebrews 11:1**). It is by faith in God's Word, fully believing and trusting in Him, that we will be saved in the age to come. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, and therefore impossible to inherit the kingdom and be saved in the age to come. Remember what you have been taught by the Word and consider the examples of all those who lived by faith and endured.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...but now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13, 16)

Likewise, you also continue in the faith without wavering, for on that Day God will not be ashamed to be called your God, for He will have prepared a city for you. Make every opportunity to live this day as if it is your last chance to do good works, for tomorrow the Lord may come.

Daily Principle #12)

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Knowing that the Lord is a consuming fire and will judge each one of us on that Day should produce in us a spirit of humbleness. We must lay aside all pride and receive Him with meekness and fear. Be humble in your walk, not puffed up or seeking your own. Christ was a perfect example, though He was God, made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross. The world, ruled under Satan, is full of deception, teaching us that we should be prideful and self-seeking. Realize that unless you humble yourself as a little child you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (Philippians 1:3)* Strive to be humble. Strive to be like Christ.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS

The rebellion of Satan and one-third of the fallen angels, which has its beginning sometime in eternity past, continues to be ever so present today. Lucifer, the beautifully created angel, sought to ascend above God and His Son. The name *Lucifer* means “morning-star” [Strong’s # H1966], but after his fall he became known as Satan or Devil, meaning “opponent, adversary; the accuser” [Strong’s #H7854].

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the
nations! For you have said in your heart:*

*‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of
God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the
farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the
clouds, I will be like the Most High.’*

*Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the
Pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

Satan is the appointed ruler of this age, ruler over all the Gentile nations. Then under Satan, from his heavenly kingdom, there are powerful angelic rulers governing various individual nations. Then under these angelic rulers, there is a further breakdown of powers. This can be seen in **Daniel** chapter **ten** with the “kings of Persia,” which could only be a division of rulers under “the prince of Persia,” a heavenly prince. In addition, “the prince of Greece” is mentioned but not relating to a human ruler for he ruled from the heavens, yet over the earthly king of Greece. Therefore, Gentile rulers of this world occupy positions of power and authority directly under a breakdown of powers within the heavenly kingdom of Satan. And we can also determine that most of the actions taken by world leaders have their origin in prior decrees and determinations rendered by powerful fallen angels in Satan’s kingdom in the heavens.

However, though Satan (the disqualified ruler) still holds his God-appointed position and governs as a rebel prince (**Daniel 4:17**), God rules and exercises complete sovereign control within the kingdom of man. At

the appointed time, a time fashioned after the foundation set in the “*six days of work followed by a seventh day of rest*” recorded in the beginning of **Genesis**, Christ and man *will* rule the earth in the stead of Satan and his angels. God does not change His mind (**Hebrews 13:8**).

Since Adam, man was created to rule the restored earth, yet Satan’s intervention in the Garden of Eden brought about man’s fall and disqualification. This is when God’s redemptive work for man began and Satan’s fate revealed.

So the Lord God said to the serpent:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed, He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

From this point in time, Satan began his attack of thwarting God’s plans and purposes for man by corrupting the seed or lineage of Adam. *And this has continued, and will continue, until the end.*

His attack fell upon Cain (Adam’s firstborn son), a man of the flesh, who was mindful of the things of man instead of the things of God. Cain brought his own offering as a sacrifice to the Lord instead of doing the Lord’s will. Abel, however, a man of the spirit (Adam’s second born), brought the correct offering. And because Abel acted by faith [**Hebrews 11:4**], he was accepted by the Lord to be the seed by which Christ would come.

Consequently, Cain became envious of his brother and killed him.

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. (1 John 3:11, 12)

This brought about a disruption in the arrival of the Seed of the woman. But God gave Adam and Eve a new son named Seth, “*For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.*” (**Genesis 4:25a**) The name “Seth” means *appointed*.

Following Cain’s sin, God cursed him from the earth and sent him out as a fugitive and a vagabond. Then Cain fell away from the Lord, married and

had a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and named it after his son. The fact that Cain built an entire city speaks of a dramatic, rapid increase in population.

But through Seth the genealogy of Adam remained pure to make possible for the arrival of the Seed of the woman. Following *seven* generations from Adam (through the descendants of Seth [**Genesis 5**], not Cain [**Genesis 4:16**]) came Enoch and within this complete period of time, God raptured him to heaven (a *type* of the rapture of the Church). Following Enoch, the pure lineage was continued through Noah, who was the *tenth* generation from Adam. And it was during Noah's day, a complete period of time, that God sent the judgment of the Flood (a *type* of the future Tribulation, pointing to Israel's judgment yet affecting the entire world).

Prior to the Flood, during Jared's day (Enoch's father [**Genesis 5:18**]), Satan again attacked the seed of Adam by corrupting the marriage relationship between man and wife; the very thing that God had established from the beginning. God had established this marriage relationship specifically for man and woman in relation to a future rulership, as a *type* of Christ and His bride in the age to come. Angels were not part of this plan and therefore did not marry.

Satan knew this and therefore put his plan of corrupting the marriage relationship by sending angels down to earth to procreate with human women. Satan's strategy was to contaminate the entire human race.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:1-8)

The strange events recorded in **Genesis** chapter **six** were understood by theologians, the ancient rabbinical sources, as well as the Septuagint translators, as referring to *fallen angels* procreating weird hybrid offspring with human women, known as the Giants or Nephilim, meaning "fallen ones." These unique events leading to the Flood are a prerequisite to understanding the prophetic implications of our Lord's predictions regarding His second coming.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can ascertain that the phrase "*sons of God*" in **Genesis** chapter **six** is referring strictly to "angels" and not man. This phrase is seen in **Job 1:6**,

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

We see this phrase again in **Job 38:7** when the Lord reveals His omnipotence to Job:

*Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who determined its
measurements?*

*Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?
To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its
cornerstone;*

*When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God
shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7)*

In **Job 38:7**, these "*sons of God*" were in heaven as eyewitnesses when God laid the earth's foundations, before man was created. Therefore, it is clear to see that these beings can only be identified as *angels*. "Sons of God" is a category of being that exists through a sovereign, divine act of creation alone — the first creation being angels. Adam is a son of God for he was created. Israel is a son of God through nations created in Jacob (**Isaiah 44:1; Exodus 4:22**). And Christians are sons of God through their creation in Christ (**Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26**). The sons of God in **Genesis** chapter **six** cannot refer to the lineage of Adam, as all from Adam

are *procreated or begotten*. Neither Israel nor Christians were in existence at this time which leaves us with only one group — angels.

Throughout the entire Word, God warns Christians of these wicked spirits and that we are to be on guard *continually*. His Word and His Spirit is our protection against these evil spiritual forces. This is the reason God sent His Son as the sacrificial Lamb — to save man from sin, from the ruler of this world, and to provide another way of redemption for the very purpose He created man in the beginning — to rule and reign with Christ in the stead of Satan and his angels. He sent us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and protect us from the evil ones.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears he will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (John 16:7-11)

In **Ephesians 6:12**, the Word reveals that our hidden enemies are the *“rulers of the darkness of this age, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* The Word reveals that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against Satan, his fallen angels and evil spirits (demons). We fight against Satan and his seed. And hopefully as we continue with this study concerning Satan and his fallen angels, we can understand more vividly the war that we are presently engaged in.

Before the Flood, these fallen angels received an extremely severe punishment from God. First, God destroyed their children, the first generation giants, by causing them to devour each other and kill each other by the sword. Then God bound the angels in Tartaros, a prison set aside exclusively for these fallen angels, until the Day of judgment. We see this recorded in **2 Peter 2:4**,

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [The Greek translation (G5020) for “hell” here is

Tartaros meaning “the deepest abyss of Hades; to incarcerate in eternal torment,” Strong’s #G5020] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...

Then again these fallen angels are mentioned in **Jude 6, 7**:

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh [the word “strange” here means “altered” or “different flesh” (Strong’s #G2087)], are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

We can determine from the account of Sodom and Gomorrah that the flesh of these spirits were “strange” or different to the flesh of humans. There were two perverse abominations being committed with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah: first, they were homosexuals (*having given themselves over to sexual immorality*) and second, they had *gone after strange flesh* (spirits). Evidently, these spirits were able to take on human form as they appeared to these homosexuals, but had strange flesh. Again, the purpose was to defile the human race so as to prevent the birth of the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman. Both the homosexuals and these spirits are reserved for special judgment.

These are just part of the contingent of ruling angels who rebelled with Satan, a perverted group who began to engage in forbidden practices with the daughters of men and who are presently bound in chains in Tartaros awaiting judgment, and with whom Christ visited after His resurrection.

Again, these “spirits” are clearly not the descendants of Adam as human beings are never referred to in Scripture as spirits. Human beings *possess* a spirit (soul, spirit and body) however we are not in itself “spirits,” as humans are not animated by the spirit, but by the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**). However, angels are spirits as we see recorded in **Hebrews 1:7**,

And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’

In **Hebrews 1:13, 14**, we see again that angels are spirits:

But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?’

In **1 Peter 3:19, 20**, note that this phrase reveals the time in which God brought judgment upon the fallen angels.

By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who were formerly disobedient, when once the Divine long suffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

The Lord waited until the ark was completed and immediately before He caused the Flood, he ordered the fallen angels bound and cast into Tartaros, the deepest abyss. Only eight souls: Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives had preserved their pedigree pure from Adam.

This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect [without blemish] in his generations. Noah walked with God.
(Genesis 6:9)

The degree to which the fallen angels were successful can be witnessed in the fact that out of all the families of the earth only Noah and his family were untainted. This is the primary reason for the destruction of human life with the Flood — to eradicate that which was completely perverse and unnatural.

Apart from the eight souls in the ark, the entire corrupted human race was destroyed and the fallen angels responsible for bringing about this perversion were at this time reserved in chains awaiting judgment — an event that still remains yet future. **(2 Peter 2:4)**

Therefore, God saved only Noah and his family from destruction and the rest of all humanity, extending to all living things that God made on the earth, were destroyed by the Flood. One would assume that the giants and/or Nephilim were history at this point in time, yet Moses said that the giants reappeared *after* the Flood.

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward...
(Genesis 6:4)

In **Genesis 9:26**, Shem is the one that was *blessed and said to have God*. From Shem descended Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, his twelve sons, and the nation of Israel. And from the lineage of Shem, the Seed came.

After Noah cursed Canaan, Ham took his family and departed from his father. Later, Canaan settled in the land that God would give to Abraham's descendants (the nation of Israel) as an inheritance, the Land

of Canaan known as the Promised Land. When Abraham arrived in the Land of promise, the Nephilim (Canaanites) were already there.

So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. (Genesis 12:5c)

When the Israelites under Moses went to scout the land of Canaan at Kadesh-Barnea, the Promised Land, they saw that the giants/nephilim” were already there dwelling in the land. The Israelites referred to them as “the sons of Anak” or “Anakim,” a race of giants from a Canaanite tribe.

“Nevertheless, the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.” (Numbers 13:28, 29)

“The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (Numbers 13:32, 33)

Under the listing of the descendants of Canaan in **Genesis 10:15-20**, note that the Jebusites, the Amorites and the Canaanites are referenced and when matching them to the groups in **Numbers 13:28, 29** it clearly reveals that the giants/nephilim were produced from the descendants of Canaan and once again re-populating the earth.

The nephilim eventually spread to all areas and therefore re-populated not only from the descendants of Canaan, but from all of the descendants of Ham’s sons. These evil spirits were able to lead them all astray and through them, many of the gods were created, such as the Baals, Molech, Ashtoreth, Ishtar, Sumerian god Annanuki (Anakims), Egyptian gods, the Greek gods, the Hindus god, the South Sea Islander gods, the Incas Indian gods, and all the other gods from all over the world.

There is a profound connection when tying together all of the gods across the world to the giants mentioned in the Word. The giant skeletons found all over the world portray similar features and characteristics that are recorded in the Bible. We also have the great pyramids and ruins providing clear evidence that only giants could have built them. For

instance, located five miles from Astorath-Kenaim is the circle of the Rephaim or Gilbal Rephaim, which includes five circles with twenty ton stones visible only from the sky and dates back to 3000 B.C.

In Lebanon, located forty miles from Beirut, are the imposing ruins of Baal which stands the largest stones in the world ever used for construction. No one has been able to calculate how much these stones weigh and no crane has been able to lift them. They were originally transported at least five miles from their place and were set very close together, so close that a pin is not able to go through them. In South America, there is the Machu Picchu where the structures are made of 250-500 ton blocks. These are just a few; there are many more structures all over the world, too many to mention them all. There were also some ruins found in an area believed to be the city of Nimrod, known as Babel or Babylon (modern day Iraq). Some of the stones weighed up to 900 tons each.

All of Ham's sons and their descendants became contaminated. Ham's son *Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. (Genesis 10:15-19)*

Ham's son *Cush* (region of Ethiopia) begot Nimrod, the giant:

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said. "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city.) (Genesis 10:8-12)

Nimrod, who is a type of the Antichrist, formed the city of Babel, better known as "Babylon," and the city of Nineveh. Both cities were known for their wickedness, idol worship, evil practices and sexual immorality — both led by Nephilim, the seed of Satan.

Ham's son *Mizraim* (land of Egypt) *begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines*

and *Caphtorim*) (**Genesis 10:13, 14**).

Goliath the giant was a Philistine and a descendant of Rapha in Gath (**2 Samuel 21:22; 1 Chronicles 20:8**). This type of giant or nephilim were known as *Raphaim* [Strong's #H7496; H7497] meaning "the dead ones; the walking dead (as a ghost) — a giant." (Joshua was instructed to wipe out these groups of Nephilim: Rephaim, Emim, Horim and Zamsummin (**Genesis 14:5-7**). The Raphaim are referred to as "the dead" in **Isaiah 14:9; 26:19b; Proverbs 9:18; 21:16**.

Many of the descendants of Mizraim also migrated to Egypt and from them evolved the Egyptian gods, who were also giants.

Ham's son *Put* was from the region of Libya (**Ezekiel 27:10**) or Africa today. His descendants were known as Libyans or Chub (**Ezekiel 30:5**) and were called "*mighty men*" (meaning giants) in **Jeremiah 46:9**, together with the descendants of Cush (Ethiopians).

And let the mighty men come forth: The Ethiopians and the Libyans who handle the shield...

The early Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Egyptians and the Philistines, who all belonged to the race of Ham, were subjugated by the Assyrians. So from all of Ham's sons came the re-birth of the Giants or Nephilim after the Flood. From this, we are able to identify the profound connection between the giants and the kings/gods.

These giants/Nephilim, as oppose to the pre-Flood giants, were smaller in height, from 35 to 100 feet tall. Then later they were an average of 7 to 15 feet tall. Many of these giant skeletons have been unearthed all over the world. These skeletons have unusual features, great height, as much as twenty feet, double rows of teeth, extra digits, some with six fingers on each hand and six fingers on each foot. It has been reported that the skulls were so large that they could fit over a person's body. There were also female skeletons recovered.

There is a large amount of information in the Old Testament about these giants. And wherever they settled, destruction and wickedness prevailed. This is why God had warned the nation of Israel not to mingle with the Gentile nations, not to intermarry and not to worship their gods. Numerous times God warned them about being disobedient and falling away. Even though God led His people out of Egypt to bring them into the Promised Land, Israel continued to be disobedient. (**Judges 3:1-8**)

After the spies entered Kadesh-Barnea to scout the land, they came back with a bad report and the Israelites complained, saying,

“Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, “The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim [long-necked ones] there.” (Deuteronomy 1:27, 28)

As a penalty for their disobedience, the Lord kept the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years. As the Israelites journeyed through the wilderness, they came up to a land named Ar, a region of Moab, that God had given to Lot’s descendants and there they found the giants dwelling in the land:

The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim [meaning “the fearful ones”]. (Deuteronomy 2:10-12)

That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place. (Deuteronomy 2:20, 21)

When the Israelites came upon King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan (giant-kings of the Amorites), God gave them victory over these two kingdoms.

For only Og King of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length [15 feet tall] and four cubits its width [7 feet wide], according to the standard cubit. (Deuteronomy 3:11)

God commanded the people of Israel to destroy the giants, assuring them that He would drive them out, giving Israel conquest of Canaan. However, Israel disobeyed the Lord’s command to destroy all of the inhabitants of the land and many of them remained with their altars still standing. Therefore, God punished Israel by leaving the demons in their midst.

Therefore I also said, “I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.” (Judges 2:3)

The areas in which Joshua failed to exterminate the Rephaim (group of Nephilim) were Golan Heights, Hebron and Gaza strip today. The Rephaim, meaning “the dead; the walking dead — as a ghost” (**Isaiah 26:14**), plague Israel to this very day.

In **2 Samuel 21:15-22**, David and his servants attacked the Philistine giants after the death of Goliath, and God delivered David from them. Samuel provides more detail on the appearance of these giants:

Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David’s brother, killed him. These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. (2 Samuel 21:20-22)

After most of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan were destroyed, God blessed Joshua and Caleb with possession of the land as an inheritance. Yet because many of the Canaanites and other tribes of the nephilim remained, Israel began to co-mingle with them, taking wives and being drawn away from the Lord. This caused Israel to worship other gods, gods who were part demon and part flesh. (See **Psalms 106:34-38**)

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites —from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” (1 Kings 11:1, 2)

The moment King Solomon began walking in the flesh and lusting after his own desires, he sinned against the Lord, marrying many Gentile women. Consequently, he fell away from the Lord and began to worship the seed of Satan (fallen angels).

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.

Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.
(1 Kings 11:5-8)

King Ahab of Israel was yet another king who did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all the kings before him. He married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal (king of the Sidonians) and began to worship the pagan god, Baal. He then set up an altar for Baal which he built in Samaria and there he erected a wooden image of the Canaanite deity.

Baal was a Canaanite demon-god of storms and fertility, who was worshiped throughout the ancient Middle East because of his association with powerful forces. The Hebrew meaning for *Baal* in Strong's #1168 is "master." Baal is often associated with the fertility goddess Asherah, whose sacred "Asherah poles" are mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament (**2 Kings 21:7**). Worship of these demon deities involved self-mutilation, ritual prostitution, and infant sacrifice. Despite these despicable practices, the Israelites themselves adopted Baal worship — a factor which always led to God's wrath and punishment.

King Ahab's marriage to Jezebel produced tragic events. Jezebel was a Phoenician princess and priestess of Baal. She had followed her father's footsteps, for he was both king and priest of Baal in Sidon. She was an extremely powerful, evil person and could influence Ahab to be wicked. Because of Ahab's weak flesh, he fell completely away from the Lord and became a full-fledged worshiper of Baal.

Throughout the generations, these evil gods and kings continued to do their evil works of trying to destroy the seed of Adam, so as to prevent the arrival of the Seed of the woman. Haman (a type of the Antichrist) in the Book of **Esther** attempted to try and annihilate all of the Jews. King Herod also tried to kill the Seed after Jesus was born. The demons did their evil deeds through these kings, and because of Israel's disobedience, these demons were able to deceive Israel into worshipping them. Their religious practices were extremely obscene and inhumane, and to make matters worse, they practiced devil worship in God's temple.

They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor

did it come into My heart. (Jeremiah 7:30a, 31 -- Comparison Scripture: Ezekiel 16:20-25)

These evil practices and the worship of these pagan gods (god, Baal) continued in the house of Israel and spread across the world. Even today, many powerful political, financial and religious leaders meet together in secret to worship these pagan gods, particularly the god, Baal [Molech] (**Colossians 2:18**). Many perform works of Satan in the name of the Lord God our Father, and worship in the house of God. But the Word assures us that God will destroy Satan, his angels, demons, and his followers at the appointed time. And God will bring Israel, God's firstborn son, to a place of repentance by sending them extreme tribulation and suffering.

And the Lord God said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them," therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them." (Jeremiah 9:13-16)

The events surrounding the future Great Tribulation in relation to the destruction of God's temple is prophesied in **Ezekiel 8:1-11:13**, providing further commentary to **Daniel 11:30-39** and **Revelation 13:11-15**.

Israel's consistent tendency was to identify with the neighboring ungodly nations and to assume their idolatry. Satan's efforts to destroy Israel resulted in the next Antichrist, Hitler, to bring about their desolation and the slaying of 6,000,000 Jews, known as the *Holocaust*. But this did not bring about Israel's repentance. As a dispersed nation, Israel, out of their own will, sought to return to the land of Palestine. An unrepentant remnant returned before the time. During the Tribulation, they will bring their idol worship into the house of God, performing all types of abominations. God will then turn them over to Antichrist and remove the daily sacrifices and His Spirit from the temple. Antichrist will place his image in the temple, destroy many who do not worship him and the image, and disperse many Jews once again amongst the Gentile nations. The extreme persecution of the Jews from the future Assyrian Antichrist will finally bring Israel to the place of repentance. Only then will God restore

Israel to the land permanently.

In **Matthew 23:31-36**, Christ reaffirmed that the “seed of Cain” (seed of the serpent) had remained when he told the scribes and Pharisees that they had inherited the guilt of their “fathers,” and He called them “serpents.”

Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

In **John 8:43-45, 47**, Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that because they were rejecting Him, they were of their father, the devil:

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me... He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

When the Seed of the woman (Christ) came, Satan and his demons worked through the Jewish religious leaders to destroy Him. But little did they know that through God's sacrifice of His Son, He would save the world from sin and provide the way of redemption for man. And God's purpose in doing this was so that man could rule in His kingdom in the stead of Satan and his angels.

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,

the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
(1Corinthians 2:6-8)

Christ's death and shed blood was able to save the seed of men (seed of Abraham) from the seed of Cain (the seed of Satan). Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Christians are able to overcome the devil and his evil spirits.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **(Ephesians 6:11-13)**

Satan and his angels currently rule from the heavenly places, and under their authority are these evil spirits, spirits of dead giants, who inhabit both the earth and the underworld (the abyss — along with the two hundred fallen angels).

The moment we take off the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit, then we give opportunity for the flesh (that which is associated with these evil spirits) to deceive us. This is why Paul spoke extensively about “crucifying the flesh,” for the flesh gives birth to sin. Our fleshly desires are associated with the seed of Satan (evil spirits). This is why we are to put to death the deeds of the body (the flesh) and walk according to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our defense against these evil spirits.

When the Gospel of the kingdom was offered to the nation of Israel, the message was to be attended by signs, wonders, and miracles in order that Israel would believe and repent. But when Israel didn't repent and the offer was set aside and given to the Church, these signs, wonders and miracles stopped. But during the ministry of the Gospel of the kingdom to Israel, Jesus performed many miracles of healing and of casting out evil spirits who took possession of individuals. We have several examples of this very thing documented in the Gospels, as seen in **Luke 8:1-3**,

And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities — Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for

Him from their substance [wealth].

Another example can be found in **Mark 5:1-20**. Jesus had arrived by boat to a town named Gadarenes. And there he met a man who was demon-possessed. The demon was named “Legion” because there were many evil spirits inside the man. The demons begged Jesus not to send them “out of the country,” meaning “into the abyss (**Luke 8:31a**).” Instead, they begged Jesus to let them enter a herd of swine in which Jesus gave them permission.

Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. (Mark 5:13).

In **Mark 5:1**, it is evident that these demons were able to enter one’s spirit and to transport in and out of humans and animals. And during the Great Tribulation, the Lord will allow the demons from the underworld to surface again. Satan will be given the key to the bottomless pit and will release demons upon the earth to torture all men except the sealed of Israel, but not kill. *In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. (Revelation 9:6)*

During the opening of the sixth bowl judgment, a holy angel will release demons from the “bottomless pit” or abyss *for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Revelation 16:14).* *And they were released to kill a third of mankind (Revelation 9:15).*

And until the day of their judgment, Satan and his evil spirits will not back down. Currently, they are out in the world seeking whom they may devour. And although Satan has nothing in Christ (since Christ has no sin), Satan does have something in man — sin. *Therefore, the potential of the flesh energized by Satan in the life of the Christian should not be underestimated.* Given free rein, the flesh will direct our choices, making us do what we know we should not do. This inner conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is persistently active.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:17)

The desires of our flesh are at odds with what the Holy Spirit desires for us: to be free from sin. Christ’s purpose for His first coming was to

destroy the works of the devil (in man), to give man the ability to be free of sin — free of the devil and of his seed. And He accomplished this by sending the Holy Spirit to dwell in our spirit.

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:8, 9)

By allowing the Holy Spirit to rein over us we have the ability to put away sin and practice righteousness. But when we allow the flesh to control our lives, we will sin continually, allowing the spirit of the devil to have victory over us. The word *of* (of the devil) in **1 John 3:8** can be translated to mean “characterized by; belonging to; coming from.” This is why at the Judgment seat of Christ those who walked according to the Spirit will receive life, but the works of the flesh will bring forth death.

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:13)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)

We are all born with an unredeemed spirit, *dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1)*, an unredeemed soul (**Ephesians 4:22b**), and an unredeemed body apart from the glory (**Romans 8:23**). Our first birth, that which is born of the flesh (our sin nature) is inextricably connected to this world and therefore to the ruler of this world (Satan), putting it in opposition to God. We can conclude then, that because of our ever present sin nature, *Satan may have many points of contact in us*. He can abide in us through the deceitful lusts of our “old man.” We see an example of this very thing in **Matthew 16:21-23**:

From the time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

The spirit of Satan was working through Peter, trying to stand in the way of God's plan. Because Peter was acting in accordance to his flesh, he was giving access to Satan. And not only was Peter eternally saved, but he was also an apostle of Christ. Therefore, this is a clear indication that every Christian has the potential to be like Peter by allowing his fleshly desires to take precedence. This is why in **1 Peter 2:11**, Peter pleads with Christians to put to death the flesh.

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...

Another example can be seen with the disciple, Judas Iscariot. Satan was able to get Judas to betray the Lord, *the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him...* (**John 13:2**)

At the time when the fallen angels had descended and procreated with women, God made it very clear that their spirits would not abide with man forever.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

*And the Lord said, "My spirit shall not strive (contend) with man forever, for he is indeed flesh (sinful flesh); yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (**Genesis 6:1-3**)*

In light of the context in the previous sentence (in **Genesis 6:2**) surrounding the actions of the fallen angels God directed this particular statement to man because of man's participation in evilness. However, Christ is the Word — His Word is Spirit — when we abide in His Word we are allowing the Holy Spirit in us to lead. This gives no place for the flesh to act in accordance to the spirit of the devil.

This is how Satan was able to place tares (false teachers) in the Church. At the inception of the Church, Satan placed these evil spirits (assuming human form; Nephilim) in the Church as pastor-teachers, teachers who were assigned this task long before; and through them the doctrine of Christ became corrupted. The Books of **Jude, first and second John, and second Peter** present commentary and warnings concerning the damage these false teachers did and continue to do in the Church. This is why it is imperative that we know and be faithfully obedient to God's Word so that

we will not be deceived.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.

And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 John 4:1-6)

We must test the spirits of all individuals, for Satan has sent many evil spirits out into the world producing false teachers. Our real battle is not with human cultists and false religionists, but with the demonic beings working through them, of which even the flesh and blood opponents themselves are sometimes unaware. These same evil spirits are the tares who Jesus mentioned in the parable of the wheat and tares recorded in **Matthew 13:38**:

The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil.

Many individuals, as warned in the Book of **Jude**, will seek to draw Christians away from the central teaching of Scripture, the Word of the kingdom. The "doctrines of demons," widely published by false teachers, is the most dangerous and deadly teaching that has ever been proclaimed. And, because of this, Jude exhorted Christians to *contend earnestly* in the race of "the faith," so that they do not succumb to these false teachings and fall away. Satan will use everything in his power to bring down faithful believers.

Those who do not believe that which God the Son has said concerning the Word of the kingdom are outright rejecting Him. And though they are Christians, they are not being brought forth out of God. They are allowing their spirits to be influenced and deceived by evil spirits, by the seed of

Satan. The way in which we can overcome is by recognizing false teachers and refusing to follow them through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in you is *greater* than he who is in the world — Satan. For those who are mature, they are able to discern by and through the Spirit of the Lord. We are to test the spirits because of false teachings. **Second Peter** and **Jude** give extensive warnings concerning false teachers who are "ear ticklers" and who "run greedily in the error of Balaam *for profit*." They take Scripture and attempt to identify it with man's interpretation of doctrine, rather than comparing Scripture with Scripture. This is the way in which many false teachers corrupt Scripture. Scripture is *always* to be compared with Scripture (**1 Corinthians 2:9-13**). And many false teachers do this to build themselves up, to promote their own doctrine, specifically for gain, for profit.

In **2 John 9-11**, John provides further warning concerning false teachers who do not confess that Jesus Christ as *coming* in the flesh. There are many that will say that there is no second return of Christ and that His kingdom is already here. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. We are to reject these spirits.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

In **Jude 4**, we are warned about these apostates or false teachers (tares) who were placed by Satan and planned by him long ago when the fallen angels produced these evil spirits.

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of these false teachers are "apostate Christians" meaning Christians who have fallen away from the Truth — the doctrine of Christ, the Word of the kingdom.

For the past six thousand years, Satan has been trying to corrupt and destroy the seed of Adam and the Seed of the woman. God's first born sons, Israel and the Church, have a future part with the Seed of the woman. And the way in which Satan tries to corrupt and destroy Christians is through *deception*. Satan is the Light Bearer. He knows

Scripture, but as the rebel ruler, works against the Truth through counterfeit interpretations. These false interpretations are believed only by those who do not consider their obligation to the Truth through the assimilation of God's Word. God's Word corrects the corrupted thinking and ways of man. We must be molded and shaped by God's Word to overcome our propensity to sin thereby overcoming the flesh, the world and the devil.

In **Matthew 24:37**, the Lord gives warning that *“as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”* Before the second coming of our Lord, the human race will once again be contaminated. Once again, fallen angels will cohabit with the daughters of men. Satan, in his continued attempt to destroy the seed, will impregnate a Gentile woman, giving birth to his literal son, Antichrist.

And most likely the kings of the ten nation confederacy ruling with Antichrist during the Great Tribulation will also be Rephaim — a type of Nephilim [**Revelation 13:1**]. Satan will rule the earth through his son during the Tribulation and his angels will also rule with him, through sons begotten by them. The revealing of these Rephaim, who will have dominion over Israel during the Tribulation, can be seen in **Isaiah 26:13, 14**:

O Lord our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; But by You only we make mention of Your name.

They are dead [meaning “Rephaim”], they will not live; They are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

In **1 John 4:3**, the Word reveals that *the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, is now already in the world.* These evil spirits (assuming many forms) are in the world today for the sole purpose of corrupting and destroying the seed of Abraham, the body of Christ — Christians. During the Tribulation, they will do the same to the nation of Israel as they did in the Holocaust, but far worse.

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven

and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke 17:26-30)

The Book of **Jude** draws a comparison to the fallen angels (and their spirits) to today’s false (apostate) teachers calling them “*filthy dreamers who defile the flesh*” (**Jude 8**). The word *defile* is the Greek word meaning “to taint, i.e. contaminate (Strong’s #G3392).” Just as the fallen angels had “fallen away” or apostatized from their high calling and defiled themselves with women, so also false teachers today have fallen away from their high calling — from “the faith,” and have defiled their flesh (departing from their purpose in Christ and walking in sin). These apostates are like *wandering stars for whom is reserved “the blackness of darkness” forever* (age-lasting) **Jude 13**. They have allowed the spirits of Satan to rein over them, as recorded in **1 Timothy 4:1**:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons....

Jude warns Christians to beware of false teachers who seek to turn others away from “the faith.” Christians are exhorted to earnestly strive for the faith so that they are able to keep themselves from being defiled. They must keep their eyes fixed on the goal of their calling, the goal of the kingdom.

But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal [by implication — a Messianic period; age-lasting (Strong’s # G166)] life. (Jude 20, 21)

At the end of six thousand years, Christ will destroy the works of Satan, his angels and evil spirits; and cast them into the abyss immediately before the opening of the Messianic Era. At the end of the Messianic Era, they will be released once again for a short while and will deceive the nations to make war with Israel; yet God will devour Satan’s army and cast him into the Lake of Fire *forever*.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTION #1:

What is God's purpose for man?

God's purpose for man is *to have dominion*. Adam and Eve were to have dominion over the earth (**Genesis 1:26-28**), however, they fell into sin and forfeited their right to rulership. This allowed Satan and his fallen angels to continue in their present ruling positions. However, God's purpose for man will not fail. God executed a plan of redemption for man by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem man and take away sin once and for all. Presently, God is acquiring a bride for His Son for the purpose of ruling and reigning together during the Messianic Era, a thousand year period of restoration. The bride of Christ will be chosen from the Church according to their faithful obedience to God. In order to qualify, one must put away sin and produce holy works according to the Spirit for the duration of their life. The word "sin" is the Greek translation "hamartano" (Strong's #G264) meaning to "miss the mark (and so not share in the prize)." Sin simply means to go against God's commandments; to offend, trespass, our faults. God has called us to live holy lives in order to fulfill the purpose for which we were originally created — *to rule and reign*.

Question #2:

What are the three major components of man and how does each play a role in salvation?

Man was created in the image and likeness of God (**Genesis 1:26**). Therefore, since God is a Tripartite, man is also a tripartite. Man is composed of *a spirit, a soul, and a body*. The Greek word "spirit" is translated "*pneuma*" meaning "wind, breath, or a state of mind." God breathed His Spirit into man's spirit to give life. Due to the fall of man, man's spirit died. But thanks be to God that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and redeem our spirits once again. The minute one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, his spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit. He now has the ability to commune with God and to be spiritually discerned. The spirit is the part of man that links him

directly with God. This aspect of salvation, the salvation of the spirit, is based on Christ's finished work at Calvary, therefore it is a past, completed work. Spirit salvation is a free gift from God and secures a believer's eternal salvation. It is now up to the believer to choose to allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to impart spiritual truth into and control his life through his own spirit for the salvation of his soul.

The Greek word "soul" is translated *psyche* meaning "life." In **Leviticus 17:11**, we find that the soul or life is in the blood; therefore the soul is that which gives life to our physical entity. The soul, being in the blood, is seen to be the animating principle of the body of flesh. It houses our desires, experiences, emotions, likes and dislikes. If a man is dominated by his soul, he will allow his desires and emotions to take control. Scripture always distinguishes between the soul and the spirit, never using the words interchangeably, as seen in **1 Thessalonians 5:23** and **Hebrews 4:12**. Therefore, the salvation of the soul should never be associated with the past aspect of salvation of the spirit. The salvation of the soul is always dealt with in a present tense with a future realization, as seen in **1 Peter 1:9**. Our present works will be judged in the future to determine the salvation of our soul-life for the Messianic Era.

The Christian's body of flesh houses an unredeemed soul and a redeemed spirit. The body is presently in a continuous state of deterioration, as it grows old and weakens with time. And it will remain in this present dying state until a future time. Scripture places the salvation of the body entirely in the future, as seen in **Romans 8:23**. Since the soul and the body presently remain unredeemed, it cannot be compatible with a redeemed spirit, as seen in **John 6:63** and **Galatians 5:17**. Scripture commands believers to put to death the lusts of the flesh and soul; and instead, walk in the Spirit. One must walk according to the Spirit now in order to acquire a redeemed body and soul in the future. Past, present and future aspects of salvation have to do with man occupying *regal positions* in the Messianic Era, when he is brought into a realization of his complete sanctification: his whole spirit, soul and body redeemed at the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Another facet of man's tripartite existence can be seen with the word translated "God" in the Hebrew text, which is *Elohim*. In complete keeping with Scripture, this word includes all three members of the Godhead — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Since *Elohim* is a trinity, for man to be created in the *image* and *likeness* of God, he too must be a trinity. Jesus is *Elohim* manifested in the flesh; and

having been made in the likeness of man (but apart from sin) He must also be a trinity. This tripartite nature of Christ was clearly revealed at the time of His death. At this time Jesus yielded up *His spirit*, which went back into the presence of His Father in heaven (**Luke 23:46**); *His soul* went to Hades or *Paradise*, the place of the dead (**Acts 2:27**), and *His body* was placed in the tomb (**Matthew 27:57-61**). This threefold separation remained until the soul and spirit re-entered the body at the time Christ was raised from the dead. And the same threefold separation occurs when a believer dies. His spirit goes to be with the Father. His soul goes to Hades or Paradise and his body to the grave or cremation.

At the end of the age, all three parts of man will be joined together and be resurrected to the Judgment seat of Christ in heaven. All Christians will be judged according to their works, whether good or bad. This will determine where they will spend the thousand year reign of Christ — either in the kingdom or outside of the kingdom of heaven. Christians who enter the kingdom (overcomers) will possess a glorified body animated by the Spirit, and a saved soul. However, non-overcomers will suffer loss, be separated from Christ, and will not possess a glorified body or be permitted to enter the kingdom for one thousand years. When the Eternal Ages begin, then all Christians will be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven with spiritual, glorified bodies of flesh.

Question #3:

What is the Christian's role and purpose in *this* life?

The Word of God reveals that a Christian's role and purpose in this life is comprised of a requirement, a work, to be completed until the end and is that which foreshadows a future goal that was originally willed by God when He created man. God revealed this work in the beginning of **Genesis** and is laid out within His six days of restorative work followed by a seventh day of rest. Realizing that to God, "one day is as a thousand years" (**2 Peter 3:8**), we can know that after six thousand years of work from the creation of man, we can look forward to a seventh one-thousand year of Rest in the Millennial Kingdom. God created His children [Christians] to walk in "good works," producing the metamorphosis needed to obtain the salvation of their souls.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

These “good works” in which Christians are commanded to walk do not emanate from Christians themselves, as “human good works” are unacceptable to God, but rather, they are *divine good works* that were originated by God before the foundation of the world. Human good works, or works of the flesh, are those works that emanate from any source other than God’s Word. Divine good works emanate strictly from God through Christians who are under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Once a believer has received the indwelling Spirit, he is a new creation, and through the act of baptism, he commits to transforming into the very image of Christ. This is the act of being “*born again*” or “*brought forth from God.*”

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord [by faith], so walk in Him. (Colossians 2:6)

All three expressions, “walk in Christ,” “walk in the Light,” and be “filled with the Spirit,” carry the same meaning. These expressions define the Christian’s role and purpose in *this* life. Our purpose in this life is to be prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with divine good works, holy and without blemish. And the key to doing this requires one to exercise faith in all that God says. He must practice to be a hearer of the Word and then a doer of the Word. This is faithful obedience to the Word of God. The Christian must grow in the knowledge of God’s Word and then abide in it throughout the duration of his life.

To properly understand this principle of faithful obedience, one needs to look no further than the example left by Christ Himself.

...But when you do good [good works/walk in Christ] and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:20b, 21)

Christ’s entire earthly ministry was administered not by the human aspect of His character, but by the divine. He openly admitted that it was not His human will He came to reveal, but it was to administer the will of His Father. Furthermore, it was by allowing His Father to do the work through Him that this was accomplished. The manner in which He executed His Father’s will and work is best expressed in **John 14:10b**:

“The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”

Christ did not live His life by His own power, but rather, allowed the Father to live and work through Him; and likewise, Christians, in order to accomplish their purpose in this life, must deny all self-efforts and allow God through the Holy Spirit to live and work through them. Scripture clearly reveals that this life is a test of our faith, to work out our own salvation. This is not the time for us to rest. The Word of God states that Christians who run the race of faith in the appropriate manner will be subjected to trials or testing in this life. We are to prepare ourselves, suffer and work *now*, so that we can reap its rewards and rest *then*.

A properly prepared Christian can enter the conflict and consistently win battle after battle. Victory is achieved through engaging the conflict, the trial, and the enemy by heeding the Lord's instructions. As previously mentioned, the present requirement or work associated with the Christian's purpose in this life has a direct correlation with a future goal. This future goal is the original purpose for which man was created — to have *dominion* over the earth. This will be realized during the future Messianic Era. When a Christian has successfully executed divine good works in this age, he can be assured of his future position as ruler in the next.

QUESTION #4:

What is promised for the *next* age?

To the overcomers or faithfully obedient Christians, rewards are promised in the coming Kingdom age. These rewards will be based upon decisions and determinations at the Judgment seat of Christ. In **Revelation** chapters **one** through **three**, Christ reveals the events of His Judgment seat which will occur immediately after the removal of the Church and before the Tribulation on earth. For those Christians who are found worthy during this time, after their works have been tried by fire, they will be awarded crowns and be chosen as the bride of Christ. They will hold regal positions, sharing the throne with Christ from the kingdom of the heavens for one thousand years.

Christians will be given a “just recompense” at the Judgment seat of Christ. This means there will be some Christians who will occupy higher positions in the kingdom than other Christians. Christians will be shown to be either qualified or disqualified to occupy positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom. For those Christians whose works failed the test of fire, they will suffer loss and will not occupy positions of

rulership in the age to come. These Christians will be found unfaithful and not prepared with divine good works during the present age. They will be cast out of the kingdom, occupying various degrees of punishment and positions of shame and disgrace for one thousand years.

A Christian having been justified by works will appear in Christ's presence properly clothed. He will possess a white wedding garment; in addition, he will be in a position to participate in the wedding festivities as the bride of Christ. Having denied himself, taken up his cross, and followed Christ in this age, he will realize the salvation of his soul and will be among those who will occupy positions as joint-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens.

But a Christian having failed to be justified by works will appear in Christ's presence improperly clothed. He will not possess a white wedding garment but will be found naked and ashamed. Lacking a white wedding garment, he will be in no position to participate in the wedding festivities. During the present age, he had lived for self and for the world rather than having lost his soul-life for Christ's sake. He would have lived a life of unfaithfulness and therefore will not be among those who will occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

A white and clean wedding garment represents faithfulness to one's calling, the righteous acts of the saints, and leads to the salvation of the soul at the Judgment seat of Christ. For those Christians who were faithful to the end, the rewards promised will result in the most amazing, superlative and unimaginable position. Nothing can be compared to it on earth. There are seven overcomer's promises revealed in **Revelation** chapters **two** through **three** listed below and will be awarded to the believer who presently perseveres in faithful obedience and is victorious in the face of trials:

- 1) *"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."* (**Revelation 2:7**)
- 2) *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life...He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."* (**Revelation 2:10b, 11**)
- 3) *"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."* (**Revelation 2:17**)

- 4) *“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—*
‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— as I also have received from My Father, and I will give him the morning star” (Revelation 2:26-28)
- 5) *“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” (Revelation 3:5)*
- 6) *“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” (Revelation 3:12)*
- 7) *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” (Revelation 3:21)*

Christ’s overcoming is associated with His sufferings during the time of His shame, rejection and rebuke. Christians are to follow the example that Christ has left, knowing that overcoming the present sufferings is with a view to the throne. All of the things contained and the conditions placed in the seven overcomer’s promises must be realized in the lives of Christians in order to be properly equipped to occupy the throne and fulfill the functions of the office that they are to hold. Christians occupying their proper place in Christ’s rejection, shame and rebuke today will result in these same Christians occupying their proper place in Christ’s acceptance, glory and reward yet future.

QUESTION #5:

Why Study Prophecy?

Throughout the entire Word of God, the central Person and focus is the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed through prophecy. Through the study of prophecy from the beginning of **Genesis**, God’s purpose for man is revealed — to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. Prophecy is the Light which the Lord has given as a guide in this time of darkness, a guide to knowing His future plan and purpose for us. The study of prophecy inspires “the hope” in things surrounding the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only through the study of Prophecy can we know

the approximate time period of our Lord's return and watch for His appearing.

How can we know our purpose, either now or in the age to come, if we do not study prophecy? The answer is: *we can't*. Only through the study of prophecy can we know what our purpose is and how to prepare for it. In this way, we are able to enter into the full realization of the things that the Lord has prepared for those Christians who love Him and long for His return.

If prophecy was of no importance, then God would not have given it to us. Everything was planned by God since eternity past. All the things that happened in the Old Testament became our examples. The events that transpired in the Old Testament were written for our admonition. He did this in order that we could understand and successfully make the journey to the kingdom. The day will come when the redemption of man and the earth *will* be fulfilled.

It is amazing to think that the correlation of events which occurred in the past was chosen by God before man was ever created. These correlated events were documented in Scripture for a stated purpose -- to point to the coming 7th Day, the seventh one-thousandth year Messianic period. Within restoration week in the Book of **Genesis**, the entire divine arrangement of the world is recorded. God restored for six days and on the seventh day He rested. This is the foundation God laid surrounding the redemption of man and the earth. As the Word reveals that one day to the Lord is as a thousand years, we can then see that the redemption of man and the earth, patterned after restoration week in **Genesis**, will last a period of six thousand years. At the end of six thousand years, God will consummate His works for the redemption of man and the earth. Then, on the seventh one-thousandth year, He will rest from all of His work ushering in the joyful Sabbath of a thousand years when Christ and His saints will reign upon and over the earth.

Furthermore, God reveals within each day of restoration in **Genesis 1:3-2:3** the overall scope of man's salvation. Through the study of prophecy, we have all that we need to be prepared for Christ's coming. Without attempting to set exact dates, God reveals to us that this age is approaching its six thousandth year. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back very soon; therefore, it is to our advantage to be ready every day.

Question #6)

What part does Israel (Jews) and the Church (Christians) have in the future Kingdom?

The Jews, the Gentiles and the Church are all separate and special creative acts of God. After the fall of man, God chose Abraham to be the one in whom a special people would form and would be favored with blessings. In turn, they were to be a blessing to all mankind. First, they would be the channel through which our Lord Jesus Christ would come (**2 Samuel 7:12, 13**). Second, they would be given the Word of God (**Romans 3:1, 2**). Third, they were to be God's witnesses to the ends of the earth (**Isaiah 43:9**).

Through Jacob, who became Israel, God created the existence of this special group known as the Jews. This special people are God's firstborn sons (**Exodus 4:22**). And despite the Jews continued disobedience towards God, they will always remain God's firstborn sons. After the creation of Israel, the Gentiles came into existence, who would make up mankind from those who failed God before the call of Abraham. After the call of Abraham, they were considered "[spiritually] *dead in trespasses and sin*," and were pagans, worshipping idols and false gods. Therefore, Israel was chosen by God to be His own special people and to witness to the Gentiles.

However, because of Israel's disobedience and unbelief, they failed in being God's witness to the Gentiles. For this reason God temporarily set aside the nation of Israel and created a third group known as the Church. This group is neither Jew nor Gentile but is composed of individuals from both Jew and Gentile, making them "*one new man in Christ*" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). These three groups will be separated throughout the rest of the ages. Once a Jew becomes a Christian, he is no longer a Jew. Once a Gentile becomes a Christian, he is no longer a Gentile. Do not be deceived by man's philosophy, for in the Word of God there is no such thing as a Hebrew Christian, Messianic Jew or a Gentile Christian. One is either a Jew or a Gentile or a Christian. The things having to do with their former creation "pass away" and they become a "new creation," part of the "one new man" in Christ, within the spiritual realm.

From Pentecost until present, God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name (**Acts 15:14**) along with the Jews to form the Church or the Body of Christ. God is presently seeking from among the

Church a bride for His Son, Jesus Christ. At the end of the age, Christ will judge Israel and the Church. Judgment for Israel will be for the purpose of bringing them to a place of repentance in order to restore them to their land, and judgment for the Church will be to determine those who qualify to rule in the heavenly kingdom. These two groups are and will be God's firstborn sons. On that Day, the whole house of Israel will be restored and those chosen from among the Church will represent the bride of Christ.

The Church is a heavenly people with a heavenly calling (**Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:4**). But Israel and the Gentiles are earthly people with earthly promises and earthly blessings (**2 Samuel 7:12-16, 23, 24**). Therefore, the Church will possess spiritual bodies and Israel will have natural bodies. In that coming Day when Christ and His bride rule and reign over the earth from the heavens, Israel will have been reestablished back into their land as the head of the nations. Man, in that Day, will rule from both the heavens and the earth.

The bride of Christ will be established as the ruling nation *in the heavens* with glorified, spiritual bodies, sitting on Christ's throne; and, Israel will be established as the ruling nation *on earth*, with Christ reigning from David's throne in the midst of the nations. Therefore, the kingdom will have two realms, one from above and one from below, through the seed of Abraham — Christ, Israel, and the Church. At this time, God's purpose will be fulfilled, as Israel will be God's witnesses to the Gentiles and the Gentile nations will, in turn, be blessed through the seed of Abraham.

Christ will have a dual reign at this time — both from His Own throne in the heavens and from David's throne on the earth. The roles that Israel and the Church will possess will be quite different. Israel will be placed at the head of the nations on the earth, and the bride of Christ will rule the nations from the heavens.

During the Messianic Era, Christ and His bride will wear crowns in the stead of angels. The transfer of the government of the earth will take place from the hands of angels to the hands of man. Before Christ and His bride begin their rule over the earth and take the scepter, Christ will have taken the crown worn by Satan by force. In **Revelation 4:10**, we see the twenty-four elders (the angels who did not fall with Satan) relinquishing their crowns before God's throne, as they will be worn by the bride of Christ during the Messianic Era.

Then Israel, during the Messianic Era, will be positioned as head of the nations and will be God's witnesses to the Gentiles. They will be a

blessed people back in their restored land, a land flowing with milk and honey forever.

Question #7)

What is “Spiritual Warfare?”

A Christian’s real battle is not with flesh and blood directly, but with Satan, his angels and his evil spirits working through flesh and blood. (**Ephesians 6:12**). Scripture reveals that the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one (**1 John 5:19**). Satan is the master deceiver; a tempter and a liar, going to and fro the earth, attempting to keep Christians from successfully accomplishing their spiritual journey. Scripture therefore provides many warnings to Christians to be on guard; always prepared for battle. If one is not strong in the Lord, he will lose the battle against Satan and his demons. If a Christian is not abiding in the Spirit, these evil spirits can gain access and attack him through the flesh.

From the beginning, Satan was successful in deceiving the woman by saying, “*You will not surely die.*” (**Genesis 3:4**) Since Adam, Satan’s goal has been to destroy the pure lineage of man and the Seed of the Woman (Christ) in order to keep Man/man from ascending the throne in his place. In **Genesis 6:2**, we see that the “sons of God,” referring to the fallen angels, came down in the form of men and took wives with the “daughters of men.” Throughout numerous examples in the Old and New Testament, we see that Satan was successful in causing many to fall away from the Lord and their inheritance. Through the flesh, Satan tempts believers to succumb to evil and to bring about their downfall. During the beginning of Jesus ministry on the earth, Satan tempted Jesus as well. Today, Satan continues to roam the earth deceiving man. Jesus warned Christians of Satan’s deceitfulness in the parable of the wheat and the tares (**Matthew 13:39**). This parable concerns “*the word of the kingdom*” and how Satan placed tares in the Church to distort this message until it was completely leavened. Today, we find the Church in this leavened condition, a condition referred to in **Revelation 3:17** as *wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*.

Knowing this, we must realize that Satan is a very real enemy to each and every Christian and his evil powers should not be underestimated. Given free rein, he is able to bring about one’s downfall. The only way that one can stand against him is through the Word of God and the power of the

Holy Spirit. One must *be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10)*. He must *put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11)*.

The whole armor of God consists of the *belt of truth* (understanding the battle that we are presently engaged in) *and the breastplate of righteousness* (performing righteous acts). It consists of being fully mature, with the preparation of the gospel of peace (ministers of the peace of God), and having the *shield of faith* at all times, with which we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (**Ephesians 6:16**). Furthermore, we must take the *helmet of salvation*, which is the “blessed hope” of His return and of our future salvation in the Millennial kingdom. Last, we must take our weapon, the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the Word of God [abiding in the super knowledge (*epignosis*) of His Word] to cause Satan and his evil spirits to flee from us. With this armor of God, constant prayer in the Spirit, and perseverance, we will be able to withstand in this evil day against *spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*.

QUESTION #8)

What must Christians do to receive the salvation of their soul?

God’s will for His children (Christians) is that they will choose to make their heavenly calling and election sure — the salvation of their soul — for the purpose of ruling and reigning with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens. And because of this, God has given us all that we need in His Word to attain this most incredible, *so great a salvation*. To put it simply, the salvation of our soul requires our *faithful obedience* until death or rapture. It requires our belief in everything that God says in His Word and then abiding accordingly. When we practice faithful obedience, we are producing good works in the Spirit. One must choose to make a complete transformation from the “old man” to “the new man” in Christ. This does not come overnight, but is a life-long process. It is a day to day work of dying to flesh (doing away with our own selfish will, desires, and thoughts) and living for Christ (being mindful of the things of God).

Our actions, whether in word or deed, matter. And the reason for this is quite clear — as Christians, we are *representatives of Christ* (we are the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit) and therefore are to be like Him — holy, without blemish and set apart from the world. This, of

course, is impossible to do through our own power. However, through the power of His might, all things are possible. When we begin to follow Christ and live according to the Spirit, this can be accomplished. The motivating factor to being faithfully obedient, obeying His commandments and persevering through trials, is a strong desire to be with Him in His future kingdom. When we anticipate His return, we earnestly work at preparing for that Day. The *hope* [Greek: confident expectation] of our future salvation motivates us to produce fruit in order to be found worthy. The terror of the Lord also keeps us motivated. The daily reminder of us standing in the presence of the Lord, face to face, to be judged for our works, whether good or bad, presents an extremely fearful picture. It helps us to press on and run the race of the faith with diligence.

Living holy lives is just one part of our transformation that leads to the salvation of our soul. Scripture says that we are *ambassadors for Christ*, meaning that we are His servants and managers of His message and of His household. And as managers, we are to make disciples of all, teaching them the “whole” counsel of God. God provides the seed (Christians) with water (Holy Spirit) to drink so that it may bear herbs (produce fruit, good works) useful for those by whom it is cultivated (to grow the Kingdom-**Hebrews 6:7**). We should do this boldly and without shame.

Another part of our life transformation will be our faithfulness during trials or testing. We must learn to put our trust in the Lord during these times of suffering, knowing that if we patiently endure, we will receive the end of our faith — the salvation of our souls. Last, during our day to day experiences, trials, and sufferings, we must never let the enemy of our soul (Satan) have victory over us and take away the desire of our goal. Instead, we must continue to wear the whole armor of God to defend ourselves against him and his evil forces. Therefore, let us press on and not grow weary, for in due time we shall reap!

Question #9)

What is the greatest characteristic a Christian can possess for soul salvation and why?

In **1 Corinthians 13:13**, God reveals the three characteristics required for soul salvation — faith, hope and love. But the *greatest* of these characteristics is “love.” God’s greatest commandment given to man is

this:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)

The way we show our love for God is to abide in His commandments.

“He who has My commandments [hearers] and keeps them [doers], it is he who loves Me.” (John 14:21)

We can deceive ourselves into believing that we “love the Lord” but proving in our practice that we are more closely aligned with the enemy of our soul. How shocking it would be in that Day to find ourselves a son of the devil rather than a son of God.

God is love. If we are to be in His likeness, we must love. God’s second greatest commandment is this:

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18).

A believer must love other believers unconditionally. Jesus is our model for love.

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love...This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:9, 12)

We must put into practice loving one another unconditionally, whether stranger or family, whether friend or foe. And we do this by putting our own feelings and thoughts aside, and doing it because Christ loves us. As believers obey His Word and abide in His love, they will come to experience and understand His love for them more and more. Intimacy with Him is the motive for loving as He loves.

Love is an amazing gift. It brings complete joy to all who share in it. And realize that *“love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8)*. Love keeps us far away from sin, but when we hate others we give birth to sin and everything that is evil. You can hate the sin, but not the sinner. Love others no matter what the circumstances and see the joy and victory that comes from doing it. Love never fails.

By continuing in this practice, we will have truly transformed into the very

image of Christ. Even the lost person will recognize us as Jesus' disciples by our love for one another, especially those of "the faith." When we have been perfected in love, we will be prepared to meet Christ. In that Day, all things such as prophecy, knowledge, hope, and faith will end, but love will remain forever.

Question #10)

Will you choose this day to overcome your life?

In the beginning, God in His mercy and grace, and because of His great love for us, blessed us with every good thing and gave us the ability to choose. Let us hear what the Lord has to say concerning the choice of life or death in the age to come:

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the Land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the Land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess."

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the Land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."
(Deuteronomy 30:11-20)

My prayer for you today is that you will choose wisely. Choose life in the age to come!

CHAPTER TEN

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

“Each day is a special gift from God, with it brings joy and suffering. Each day is a test of our faith; For God will judge everyone’s work, including every secret thing.” —Laura Whitley

No one forgets the day they acknowledge their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. This day marks our eternal salvation and the beginning of our race of faith; therefore, it is an extremely important day of our lives. I remember this day as if I was standing there right now. I was fifteen years old and had been involved in a volleyball team during the summer at a Methodist Church where my cousin attended. My parents, who were raised in the Catholic religion, also raised me in Catholicism. I attended Catholic school along with my three brothers for several years. But that year, when I turned fifteen, my father took us out of the Catholic Church completely. It is amazing how God works miracles at the perfect time. My father had a burning desire to know the Lord, and began to read and study the Bible on his own for the first time.

The Catholic Church affirms that they have been given the authority to bind or loose here on earth. Therefore, the priests believe that they have the authority to hear from its parishioners the confession of sins, to forgive sins and be the ones to teach doctrine that stems from Roman Catholic tradition. Thereby, they repress and do not promote the individual study of the Word of God. But when my father began to study the Word, God opened up his eyes to many truths that were in opposition to what the Catholic Church taught and the practices they engaged in. Many of the practices of the Roman Catholic Church have no Scriptural grounds, such as the power to forgive sins, the worship and praying to Mary or to dead saints, the sign of the cross, the chanting of prayers, the requirement of the mass and sacraments necessary for salvation and other false practices passed down by the traditions of men. All of this originated in 1870 when Pope Pius the Ninth changed the criteria for tradition. The tradition before that time was that it would be in complete agreement with Scripture. But at the first Vatican Council, Pope Pius the Ninth declared the doctrine of

papal infallibility; which is that the Pope possesses full and complete power and authority over the whole Church, that he can rule independently on any Church matter and that there is no higher authority on earth than the Pope. So the Roman Catholic Church recognized the Bible, the Pope and their church tradition as equal in authority for faith and doctrine.

Only by the grace of God was my father able to separate himself from this false religion and be lead to the truth. And God gave him the strength to stand up against many of his family members who rejected his decision, cursed him and disassociated themselves from him.

So, at this particular time, I was invited to go to a Church camp with the volleyball team from this Methodist Church. It was the summer of 1979. I accepted, excited that I was going on a trip away from home with my friends. I was glad to get away, as I was, and as most teenagers are at this age, difficult and troubled. I am sure my parents felt the same about my week's departure. We were going in well-accommodated air conditioned buses to Sacramento, California from South Texas.

This in itself was very inviting and if you have ever been to South Texas (next to the border of Mexico) in the summer you know what I'm talking about. The average climate there is 95 degrees with 100% humidity. Going to the mountains in northern California where it is cool and scenic seemed like a much better place to be! I had already pictured in my mind that it would be a week full of play and adventure. The arrival proved to be of no disappointment. The setting was just beautiful, with rustic cabins surrounded by mountains and pine trees. The air was crisp and cool with the scent of pine and green grass within the campground. It was breathtaking!

As we got settled in, we were given an agenda of the activities for the week. As I read it, I was surprised to read that we had a tight schedule that included Bible study, fellowship, Church service, volleyball and adventure. Although I was not expecting this agenda, I was curious and interested in what it was all about. They had previously told us to bring our Bibles for the trip, and this was peculiar to me coming from the Catholic Church, but I didn't question it.

My mother had bought me a small Bible a few months before when I was being a bit rebellious (ok, quite a bit) and she had circled certain verses she wanted me to read — particularly those that commanded we be honorable to our parents and to be clean and holy (I still have this Bible).

So I was prepared with my Bible in hand and had already decided that I would keep an open mind. To my surprise, I was very interested in all that I was being taught. We would separate in small groups to study God's Word in a picnic setting with the mountains all around us. Everyone around me was enthusiastic about learning and was so nice and caring. Throughout the week, we had two Church services scheduled, one on Wednesday and one on Saturday night and then we were scheduled to leave on Sunday morning. The week was just an unbelievable God-given time for me. God had a perfect plan for my life — of course, totally different than what I had planned.

At the end of the week after much study, worship and fellowship we were preparing to get ready to go back and it was time for the last service on Saturday evening. I walked inside the quaint little wooden Church in the center of the campground, the lights were very dim and they had candles burning down the aisles and in the front altar. My high school friend was up front playing soothing Christian music on the piano and singing softly as we all entered. We sang songs and the pastor spoke for about forty-five minutes. As he was speaking, I became emotional, with the feeling of butterflies in my stomach.

When the pastor had finished his speech, he made a request for those who had not, but wanted to acknowledge their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ to come up to the front to pray. Many got up and walked to the front and again my friend began to play the piano and sing. My heart began to pump very fast; I knew I wanted to commit my life to the Lord. At this very moment, I placed my belief in the Lord. I acknowledged that He is the Messiah, that He came in the flesh, was crucified, died for my sins and rose again on the third day. I got up and began to walk to the front. Many others were walking up. The little Church was filled with so much emotion and I could feel the power of the Holy Spirit at work that evening. As my friend played the piano, she began to weep and her voice began to crack as she could no longer sing. We all cried. I had never done so much of it in my life. After I prayed, acknowledging my belief in the Lord, I prayed for forgiveness for my past sins. I prayed that the Lord would forgive my rebellious acts towards my parents. I prayed that He would forgive all my past actions and conduct. I was a completely different person that night as I allowed the Spirit of the Lord to be active through me.

When I arrived back home, everyone noticed a big change in me. My father had us attend an "Assembly of God" Church with Pastor Bowen,

who we all called “brother Bowen.” I was active in the Church and at times would get up to sing to the Lord. I was an avid reader of the Word, though I only read certain popular verses that helped me through my circumstances. I never did actually *study* the Word. Needless to say, I fell in and out of God’s Word for several years after that. I attended different Churches, and at one time, went back to the Catholic Church for a while. There was always a question in my mind lingering on and on that I never got answered.

When I attended service, I noticed the messages were the same — a historical account of the contents of the Bible, but never the purpose. My question was, *“I am saved, now what? There has to be more than this. What is my purpose in life?”* Since there was no understanding of my purpose in Christ, no foundation to build upon and no hope, my ways continued with that of the world and I was blinded and carnal just as most other Christians. My life was a mess without God, but at the time I didn’t realize it. My choices were extremely bad and my actions worse. I made poor choices in my relationships but I still put my strongest efforts in them, whereas my relationship with Christ was nonexistent. I didn’t pray or read anymore. My spirit was dormant. But God was there for me, always giving me a wake-up call.

I was twenty-three years old, divorced and in another disastrous relationship; and I was living with my parents at the time. I was accompanying my boyfriend to a conference that he was attending in Houston and he was late in picking me up. When he came in to greet my parents, we were busy talking together and I could see in his face a sense of urgency. I figured we had time since the airport I thought we were leaving from was only fifteen minutes away. When we got in his car to leave his face was red and he exploded in anger, hurling cutting remarks at me for making him late to the airport. It turned out that it was another airport that we were leaving from, which was an hour away. We never would have made it in time. But he was relentless to try and make it; a completely different person came over him at that moment.

I lived out in the country at the time so the roads were two-way, narrow and curvy. His temperament forced his foot to hit the gas pedal to the floor. I looked over at the speedometer to see we were going 120 miles per hour in his BMW sports car. I grabbed the top right handle above the door and held on to it tightly. We were coming up to a big curve and it was then that he began to lose control of the car. As the car veered to the

left side, I noticed a truck coming in our direction. Immediately I shouted, “*We’re going to crash!*” I have never in all my life been so petrified. In my mind, I could see the newspaper headlines the next day: “*Texas couple perishes in car accident.*” Everything happened so fast.

My boyfriend attempted to move back to the right lane, but we nipped the oncoming truck, just enough to take us directly into a ditch, setting the motion for the car to turn over and over and over — sideways. Each time we turned over, I would see light and then I would see darkness. We must have turned over five times. Sobbing, I cried out to the Lord, “*Please God, help me!*” “*Please, God, Please!*” It seemed like only a matter of seconds and then it was over. Did I tell you we didn’t have our seat belts on? The car landed upside down in a field. I was thrown to the back halfway in and halfway out of the vehicle and I was unconscious. My boyfriend got thrown out of the car from his side. He awoke first and was calling my name. He pulled me out of the vehicle and I awoke. I had no shoes on, my hose and clothes were ripped and I had glass engrained on my skin all over. But I had no broken bones. My boyfriend broke his collar bone and nothing else. We walked out of their alive and with no major injuries! We were taken to the hospital in an ambulance to be treated for minor injuries.

A week later, we went to see the vehicle at the junkyard. I couldn’t believe my eyes. The owner of the junkyard asked us who had died in that car! We told him that we were the ones who were in it. The right passenger side where I was sitting was completely smashed in and if I would have had my seat belt on, I would certainly have died. It was a miracle from God that we lived. God was not ready for me to go — He had other plans for me. While I was standing there looking at what was left of the vehicle, I said a prayer of thanks to God for saving me. I will never forget this experience as long as I live. God had truly answered my prayer. That should have been a wake-up call for me. I should have at that point re-dedicated my life to God and chose to go His way. Instead, I again chose the wrong path, the path that leads to destruction.

God loves us so much and wants all of us to know Him and His purpose for us — our future salvation, that He attempts to get our attention by “cornering” us. His purpose is to get us to stop going our own carnal direction, according to our own self-centered ways and begin to live His way. Our way produces death in the age to come and His way produces life in the age to come. He is telling us to please choose *His* way.

But for the next fourteen years, I was living according to the flesh and the world. The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and my ambitions and desires took all of my time. I had no time left for God. I was twenty-seven years old when I started an employment service company. God blessed the business for ten years and then just when competition sky-rocketed, God blessed me with a buyer for my business. But pride and self-centeredness got in the way of giving thanks to God for my blessings and glorifying Him through it all. And it was at this point in time when God decided to give me another wake-up call.

After the business sold in 1999, I took on the task of building my “dream home” and sub-contracting it myself. Eight months later, I finished a 6,700 square foot house and moved in. My parents moved in with me while they were in the process of having their home built. I was working as an independent contractor doing outside sales and felt very content with my life. And then six months later, a bomb hit right on top of me. My second divorcee (the one with the car accident) was suing me for child custody for the reason, and I quote, that he “*wanted to make my life miserable.*” Then, to make matters worse, he enticed my first husband to do the same. So he did. I was going to two court trials for almost two years. Because of this, I had no money. Then, I lost my job and was about to lose my house. I had my house up for sale hoping that it would sell fast. Then, I lost both custody battles. Though the orders stated joint custody, the primary residence would be with the fathers. I was devastated. The day that I packed both my sons clothes and saw them go, I became deeply depressed. That evening I attempted suicide.

But God was not ready for me to depart yet. It was merely a wake-up call. My body did not accept the thirty sleeping pills that I consumed and I vomited profusely for over an hour. I ended up at the hospital around two in the morning still awake and my heart still pumping. The next day while I was at home alone, I remembered my Lord. I found myself sobbing again to Him. Desperate, I humbly got on my knees in the middle of the living room and I prayed. I cried out to Him,

“Lord, please forgive me for abandoning you and please forgive me for my past faults. If you hear me, and you care for me, then please, please, help me. Help me with the pain in my heart. Help me to start anew. Lord, if you do this, I promise to give You the rest of my life to do Your will. Please, God, please!”

Two days later I had scheduled an open house. Several couples came by

and that evening I received four offers to buy! It was a miracle from God. I found a job with a local phone book company as an outside salesperson and made new friends within the company. About a month later, my work friends invited me to lunch at Chili's Restaurant, secretly setting me up with a client of theirs. When I arrived there were about eight of us and seated directly across from me was their client. The moment I saw him, I knew God had sent me my "soul-mate." Six months later (I was thirty-seven years old) we were married and we are going on thirteen years of marriage to date.

I started my life anew and I never looked back. God answered my prayer almost immediately. He opened my eyes to the destructive life I was leading. But he had to bring me to my knees first. He had to allow these painful hurdles in my life so that I would finally call on him for help. All pride and self-centeredness had to be put away. And when I was stripped of it, I became the person that He wanted me to be. And not only me, but many Christians. In the future, we know that the Lord will bring Israel to their knees and they will call on God for help. Only then, will God hear them and answer them. Only then, will He restore them.

My husband and I moved into a house, went to a Baptist Church on Sundays and started bible studies in our home. We had a son of our own and continued going to Church and having bible studies. Everything seemed wonderful and this time I always gave thanks to God for His blessings. But deep in my heart, something was missing. I kept going back to the question I had when I first got saved, twenty-three years ago, which was "*I'm saved, now what?*" "*There has to be more than this.*" "*What is my purpose in this life?*"

One day two of my closest friends (her and her husband) with whom I went to high school with and who was attending our bible studies, invited my husband and I to their Baptist Church. They had met a bible teacher and former pastor who they invited to teach at their Church and they wanted us to hear him speak. They were also thinking about having him start a weekly bible study at their home. So we went. He seemed to be very informed in the Word of God. So we began going to the bible studies at their home. At first, I didn't understand the message that he was teaching. I told my husband that I was having a difficult time understanding and that we should probably stop going. But he told me to give it more time and to pray about it. So I did. I prayed, asking the Lord for the understanding of His message. The next Sunday during bible study, I understood everything that he was teaching! It was as if the Lord

opened by eyes and gave me full understanding. Because I had a strong desire to know His Word and my purpose in this life, He answered my prayer. From that day forward, I was passionate about growing in His Word, so I began to study on my own and to read books (alongside the Word) that the pastor-teacher suggested. Shortly after, we scheduled a baptism in our backyard pool and my husband, I, and our sons re-committed our lives to God for the salvation of our souls. This was in 2005. We moved the bible studies to our home and we have been growing in the Word and learning to be hearers and doers of the Word ever since. I am so thankful to my husband for not allowing us to quit going to the bible studies! And every day I am so thankful to God for giving me the greatest gift of all--the understanding of His Word and His promise of SO GREAT A SALVATION!

I give thanks to God for blessing me with such a wonderful family — my husband, Noble; my four sons: Troy, Bryan, Jacob and Cody; my parents, Leo and Velia; my Cornerstone Church family, John and Ann Herbert and my brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those of “the faith.” I also thank God for putting Charles Strong in our path and using him to bring us the Gospel of Glory, the Word of the Kingdom, which is the Truth of the Word of God. Praise to our Lord forever!

In the hope of His glory,

— Laura Whitley

JOIN THE KINGDOM

Saved at last and for a purpose,
our tasks are still undone.

A race of the faith has started,
and to the end we must run.

Predestined as adopted sons,
to do His will for Him.

Through His blood we have redemption,
forgiveness for our sins.

Many souls still yoked by slavery,
milk is all they know.

Solid food is on the menu,
we will reap what we sow.

In times of strife, must not lose heart,
try to stay steadfast.

An outward man is perishing,
the inward man will last.

Mortal flesh an earthen vessel,
suffers light affliction.

But day by day the mind renewed,
leads us by conviction.

One more reason we need to stop,
and get down on our knees.

Asking for the understanding,
to seek His mysteries.

Increasing knowledge of His Word,
can help produce the fruit.

The planted seeds begin to grow,

gaining strength from their root.

The prince of power of the air,
is our adversary,
Working through disobedient sons,
and they will never marry.

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit,
are sons of faithful obedience.
They are promised the heavenly land,
to rule over earth by inheritance.

The heart looks out with anxious eyes,
to the coming ages.
In due time there will be fullness,
payment for our wages.

Are your works of gold and silver?
Maybe wood, hay or straw?
If they burn when lit a fire,
“I knew you not, you never saw.”

We have a purpose,
the future is not dim.
Created in His image and likeness,
to rule and reign with Him.
Some might think it's rather selfish,
looking forward to the end,
But I want you to join the Kingdom,
therefore I beseech you my dear friend.

—Curtis Robinson

Recommended Books, Websites & Media

Books:

Gary T. Whipple

Shock & Surprise Beyond the Rapture
The Matthew Mysteries

Order through: Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc.

P.O. Box 1246

Hayesville, NC 28904

www.schoettlepublishing.com

A. Edwin Wilson

Selected Writings of A. Edwin Wilson

Order through: Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc.

Arlen L. Chitwood

Salvation of the Soul
Mysteries of the Kingdom
Search for the Bride
The Study of Scripture
The Judgment Seat of Christ
The Time of the End
Prophecy on Mount Olivet
In the Lord's Day
Signs in Johns Gospel
Spiritual Warfare
From Acts to the Epistles
Let us Go On
Esther
Ruth
Redeemed for a Purpose
The Most High Ruleth
Seven, Ten Generations

Order through: The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.
2629 Wyandotte Way
Norman, Oklahoma 73071
www.lampbroadcast.org

R. E. Neighbour

If They Shall Fall Away

Order through: Schoettle Publishing Company, Inc.

G.H. Pember

The Coming of the Kingdom

The Great Prophecies Vol. I-IV

Order through: Schoettle Publishing Company, Inc.

Websites:

www.bibleone.net

Charles Strong

www.cornerstonejacksonville.com

**Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, Jacksonville FL
John and Ann Herbert**

www.lampbroadcast.org

Arlen Chitwood

www.schoettlepublishing.com

Lewis Schoettle

Media:

www.cornerstonejacksonville.com

On-line sermons/studies

Scripture Index

Book of Genesis.....14, 19	4:4.....95, 178	Chapter 15.....804
.....125, 155, 240, 350, 475	4:10.....179, 766	15:1.....85, 530
516, 565, 751, 801, 805, 806	4:16, 25a.....760, 761	15:19.....218
Chapter 1.....516, 605	Chapter 5.....761	15:19-21.....118, 187
Chapter 1, 2.....104, 108	5-9.....129	16:11.....187
.....463, 525, 741	5:1-25.....129	17:21.....188
1:1.....13, 15, 115, 116, 252	5:3.....177, 740	19:1.....192
1:1-1:26.....175	5:5-23.....129	Chapter 22-24.....102
1:1-2:3.....13, 14	5:18.....761	22:1.....188, 742
.....41, 117, 143, 736	5:21.....180	22:18.....118, 119, 230
1:1-2:25.....758	5:24.....180, 763	Chapter 24.....33
1:1-3.....165	5:25, 26.....179	24:2-8.....102
1:1-25.....738	Chapter 6.....764, 765, 767	24:58.....103, 191
1:2.....15, 126	6:1.....668	25:5.....191
1:2b-25.....546	6:1-4.....129, 182, 790	25:23.....195
1:3.....42, 517, 804	6:1-8.....762, 763	25:31-34.....196
1:6-8.....42	6:2.....807	29:1.....197
1:9-13.....42, 143	6:3.....129	36:24.....768
1:14-19.....43	6:4.....180, 184, 185, 772	37:1.....118, 198
1:20-23.....45	6:8.....181	37:23-28.....199
1:24-31.....46	6:9.....772	39:8, 9.....200
1:26.....13, 32, 176	6:9, 18, 22.....183	41:16.....209
1:26a.....29	8:3, 4.....160	41:38-40.....202
1:26b.....51	9:13-15.....642	42:16.....204
1:26-28.....104, 116, 797	9:18a, 22.....775	42:21.....205
1:26-2:2.....126	9:20-23.....774	44:9.....205
Chapter 2.....108	9:24-27.....778	44:27-29.....206
2:1-3.....46, 472, 541	9:25.....184	45:7, 8.....206
2:3.....127, 230	Chapter 10.....688	48:3.....207
2:7.....29, 31, 32	10:8-12.....780	48:13-20.....208
2:9b.....618	10:13.....185	49:17.....207
2:16, 17.....30, 176	10:13-15.....783	50:20.....209
2:24, 25.....104, 244	10:15-20.....185, 779, 780	
3:4.....14, 176, 177, 580, 807	11:31.....118, 165	Book of Exodus
3:6.....13	12:1-3.....115, 186, 313	2:1.....210
3:9.....258	12:3.....310, 391, 530, 654	3:5.....218
3:15.....182, 514, 760	12:5c.....779	3:18.....213
3:21.....31, 177	12:6c.....186	4:22.....119, 124, 197, 203
Chapter 4.....13	13:10, 11, 12.....192	.....230, 762, 805
4:1.....178	Chapter 14.....804	7:11.....249, 677
	14:18.....144	7:14.....660

7:17-21.....249, 671	27:18-23.....217	Chapter 4..... 366, 649
Chapter 12-15.....545	Book of Deuteronomy	4:11.....237
14:30, 31.....470	1:27, 28.....782	Book of 1 Samuel.....645
19:5, 6.....118, 353	2:1.....386	15:1, 22.....238, 239
20:9-11.....13	2:10-12, 20, 21.....782	16:1.....238
20:11.....525	2:11.....185	16:7.....282
25:32.....608	3:11.....185, 782	22:1, 2.....240
31:12, 13, 16, 17....416, 525	5:21.....568	Chapter 25.....242
32:1.....215	6:5.....810	25:32, 33.....242
33:12, 20.....218	7:11ff.....219	Book of 2 Samuel.....645
33:20-23.....330	7:23, 24.....219	1:18.....767
34:29-35.....728	8:3c.....113	Chapter 5.....242
37:17.....608	26:18.....118	6:14.....241
Book of Leviticus	30:11-20.....811	7:12, 13.....118, 805
17:11.....30, 35, 515, 571	33:22.....207	7:12-14, 16.....241, 516
.....713, 771, 798	Book of Joshua....145, 218	7:14.....116, 195
Chapter 18.....776	2:1.....220	21:15-22.....783
18:3-8.....777	2:8-13.....221, 222	21:20-22.....783
18:6-23.....777	5:13.....218	21:22.....780
18:23; 20:15, 16.....769	6:1ff.....220	22:21-25.....334
19:18, 18b.....752, 810	6:1-26.....145	Book of 1 Kings
20:11.....777	6:1-5, 15, 16.....145, 223	3:1.....242
23:3.....127, 541	6:23-25.....222	3:3.....734
25:11.....130	6:26.....221	3:5.....271, 732
26:40.....522	10:13.....767	3:9.....242
Book of Numbers	14:8.....218	3:10-14.....243
11:6-10.....215	21:43-45.....127, 542	8:33-39.....649
Chapter 13.....64	24:15.....737	Chapter 9.....245
13:28, 29.....185, 779	Book of Judges	9:4-7.....244
13:30, 31.....219	2:3.....782	11:1, 2.....783
13:32, 33.....779	2:11-15.....226, 275	11:3-8.....244
13:33.....185	10:6.....185	11:5-8.....784
Chapter 14.....64	Chapter 18.....207	16:34.....221
14:1-4.....219	Book of Ruth.....225	Chapter 17.....246
14:2-5.....551	.....253, 281, 356, 399, 698	17:1.....245, 249, 673
14:22, 23, 29-31....470, 471	1:14b.....743	18:24.....246
14:39-42.....474	1:16.....226, 745	18:27-29.....246
14:40-45.....220	2:8, 9.....228	18:37-40.....246
16:1-4, 31-35, 41...556, 557	2:11, 12.....229	Book of 2 Kings
22:2; 23:11.....555	Chapter 3.....647	2:11.....247, 493
23:9.....690	3:1-3, 5.....231	21:7.....784
25:1-3.....555	3:3.....232, 278, 367	
27:12, 15-17.....217	3:5.....743	

Book of 1 Chronicles	2:7.....116	25:21, 22.....426
5:1.....207	2:8, 9.....266	31:10.....275, 507
20:8.....780	14-145.....268	31:10-31.....276
21:12.....649	15.....269	Book of Ecclesiastes.....172
Book of Ezra.....250, 251	24.....266, 338	.....245, 279, 732
7:1.....251	25:9.....324	2:9-11.....172
Book of Nehemiah.....160	27:14.....655	3:14, 15.....280
.....250, 251	33:1.....281	7:14.....751
1:1.....250	34:22.....444	12:3, 14.....767
Chapter 2.....160	37:11.....324	12:13.....280
Book of Esther.....251	50.....266	12:13, 14.....173, 745
.....281, 784	83:5.....689	Song of Solomon.....272, 282
Chapter 1.....251, 256	103:19-22.....115	Chapter 2.....283
Chapter 1, 2.....254	110.....266	Book of Isaiah
1:1.....251	147:1.....281	1:2ff.....163
1:4.....251	Book of Proverbs.....265	1:4, 5.....120
1:19; 2:4.....252	.....271, 272, 618, 732	1:4-6.....524
2:12.....253	1:20-33.....732	1:5, 6.....518
Chapter 3-10.....254	2:1.....61	1:9.....293
3:5, 6.....255	2:1-9.....273	1:18-20.....232
Chapter 4.....255	3:5, 6.....756	1:21.....689
5:3.....256	3:13-18.....271	2:3.....662
10:20-22.....256	3:18.....619	Chapter 6.....283
Book of Job.....257, 264	3:18-22a.....89	6:9, 10, 11a, 13.....284
1:1-3.....257	3:21, 22.....279	9:1-7.....283
1:7.....258	4:7-9.....61	9:6.....121, 124
1:6.....115, 762	8:10, 11, 22-36.....274, 275	10:20.....284
1:20-22.....259	9:10.....59, 257	Chapter 11.....284, 287
2:1.....115	9:18.....781	11:2.....274, 604, 609, 643
2:10a.....260	10:6.....751	11:11-15.....251
Chapter 3.....287	10:27.....60	14:9.....781
7:19-21.....261	10:27-29.....279	14:12-15.....13, 324, 759
19:25.....265	11:17.....328	14:13.....15, 115
38:4.....261	11:18, 19.....327	21:9a, 10.....692
38:4-7.....762	11:28.....481	24:23.....144, 704, 707
38:7.....764	11:30.....88, 618	24:29, 34.....284
42:12.....261	13:12.....619	26:13, 14.....794, 812
42:15.....262	14:26, 27.....279	27:2, 3, 6.....528
Book of Psalms.....265, 732	15:4.....619	28:5, 6.....528
Psalms 1.....266	16:5.....324	28:10.....736
	16:31.....86	29:9-16.....524
	19:24.....60	31:4.....284
	21:16.....781	34:5, 8.....654

35:1, 2.....282	25:1-14.....287	36:24-28.....521
Chapter 42.....283	29:10.....287	36:26.....315
43:1.....122, 657, 661	29:10-14.....250	37:1-14.....545
43:9.....118, 531, 805	29:11.....585	37:3-6.....290, 536
43:9-12, 21.....313, 659	Chapter 30, 31.....251, 287	37:10-14, 21, 22.....699
43:10.....532	30:10.....314	37:11-14.....523, 536, 683
44:1.....762	31:12, 13.....322	37:14-28.....290
45:18.....13, 125	32:6-9.....199	37:21, 22.....683
46:9, 10.....155	32:26, 27.....124	37:24-28.....300, 516
49:8.....409	33:6-9.....523	39:21.....290
50:1.....520	46:9.....185, 781	39:23.....653
Chapter 52.....284	Book of Lamentations.....287	39:25-29.....165
52:7.....579	3:25, 26.....288	43:7.....290
Chapter 53.....283	4:14.....524	44:15.....207
53:4-6, 11.....30	Book of Ezekiel	44:28.....598
53:7.....323	1:1.....644	48:4.....207
53:7-9.....461	1:26.....610	48:35.....292
55:1-13.....286	1:26-28.....288	Book of Daniel.....158, 292
Chapter 56.....284, 285	2:8-3:4.....670	1:36-39.....312
Chapter 59.....284	4:1-8.....291	Chapter 2.....294, 306
60:16.....231	6:2-10.....289	2:27, 28.....293
Chapter 61.....165, 285	8:1-11:13.....785	2:31.....676
61:1-3.....322	9:4-7.....658	2:35d.....526
61:6.....654	10:1.....644	3:1.....678
Chapter 62.....165, 284	10:18.....297	3:25.....295
64:4.....395	11:14.....290	Chapter 4.....296
Chapter 65.....284	12:11-15.....297	4:10-12.....349
65:17-25.....710	16:15-35.....289	4:17.....761
66:1.....125	16:15-39.....689	4:26.....115, 125
66:7-13.....680	16:20, 21.....289	5:21b.....292
66:23, 24.....97	16:20-25.....784	7:7.....311, 676
Book of Jeremiah.....286	20:12.....541	7:8.....165, 302, 677
2:20; 3:1-8, 14-20.....121	20:33.....290	7:9.....300
3:1, 3.....294, 688	20:34-38.....536, 741	7:9, 13.....610
3:1, 14, 20.....189, 237, 520	23:30.....689	7:25.....161, 298, 307
4:1-4.....288	23:28-31.....295	7:26, 27.....257
4:5-31.....287	24:15.....291	Chapter 8.....298, 306
7:30a, 31.....784	Chapter 25-32, 35.....290	8:8, 9.....302, 677
9:13-16.....785	27:10.....185, 781	8:11d.....305
19:1-19.....97	28:13-19.....13	8:11-14.....297
20:9.....287	28:14.....115, 126, 239	8:13, 14.....165
20:14.....287	28:16, 17.....491	8:17-19.....302
23:1-8.....287	30:5.....185, 781	8:19.....312
23:5, 6.....328	36:8-38.....290	8:23, 25.....302, 648
	36:24.....537	8:23-25.....449

Chapter 9.....302, 720, 750	6:1-3.....311	Book of Malachi.....307
9:1, 2.....160	Book of Amos.....307	4:1-6.....143
9:20-27.....159	3:7.....115, 156	4:5, 6.....671
9:21, 24, 25.....160	5:16.....640	Book of Matthew.....61
9:26.....161, 649, 651	5:16-2:7.....143	Chapter 1.....241
9:27.....165, 297, 303, 650	9:11.....165	1:1.....515, 632
Chapter 10.....759	9:12.....686	1:5.....221
10:1.....300	Book of Obadiah.....307	1:16.....165
10:4-6.....288	Chapter 15.....640	3:1-3.....520
10:13, 20.....300	Book of Jonah.....132, 312	3:11, 12.....317
10:14, 21.....301	1:1.....312	3:15.....488
Chapter 11.....677	1:17-2:2, 6, 9c, 10.....132	3:16-4:1.....227
11:2, 3.....301	3:1-3.....132	4:1.....264
11:4, 5, 21.....677	3:4a.....315	4:4.....54, 113, 588
11:5.....302, 303, 306	Book of Micah.....310	4:10, 11.....583
11:16b.....651	Chapter 3, 4; 5:2.....311	4:17.....120, 153
11:20, 21.....302	5:3, 4.....674	.....318, 383, 520, 613
11:21, 22.....649	5:5, 6.....212, 290, 677	4:17-25.....518
11:28-31.....302	Book of Nahum...310, 311	4:23.....115
11:30-32.....298	Book of Habakkuk.....310	Chapter 5.....266
11:30-39.....785	1:9-11; 2:2-4.....312	5:5.....278, 394, 569
11:31.....297, 303, 305, 650	1:12.....312, 492	5:8.....218
11:32, 33.....303	Book of Zephaniah.....307	5:10.....480
11:36-39.....303, 313, 651	1:2.....640	5:11, 12.....120, 175
11:39.....691	1:2-4.....309	5:14-16.....608
11:45b.....304	1:2-18.....143	5:14, 16.....44
12:1a.....648	3:13.....680	5:16.....210, 334, 427
12:1, 2.....109	Book of Haggai.....310	5:17, 18.....414
12:1-3.....304	Book of Zechariah.....307	5:43-45, 46, 48.....598
12:3.....91	1:14, 15.....309	5:43-48.....753
12:6b.....304	4:1.....608	5:44-48.....426
12:7, 11.....308	4:14.....674	6:5, 33.....722
12:7c.....654	9:9.....157	6:9-13.....722
12:9.....156, 670	12:10.....120, 206, 290	6:13.....264, 489
12:11.....297, 303, 449, 650	13:8, 9.....289	6:14, 15.....362
12:11-13.....305	13:9c.....653	6:19-21, 24.....483
12:14.....300	14:1.....640	6:28, 29.....282
Book of Hosea	14:1, 8, 9.....308	6:33.....327, 568, 738
1:2; 4:15.....121	14:1-15.....143	7:7, 8.....749
3:4.....310	14:1, 8, 9.....314	7:12.....752
5:6, 7, 15.....310		7:13, 14.....585
5:13-6:2.....523		7:15.....351
5:15-6:3.....538		7:21-23.....18, 267, 374
5:15-6:2.....314		8:8-12.....537
6:1, 2.....134, 520		8:12.....94

10:5-8.....	518	16:21-23.....	790	24:15-22.....	648, 651
10:7.....	120	16:23.....	429	24:16-22.....	673
10:28.....	60, 621, 703	16:24-27.....	40, 433	24:19-22.....	449
11:29.....	324	16:25-27.....	703	24:22.....	529, 649, 656
12:37.....	490	16:26, 27.....	83, 567	24:29, 30a.....	655
12:38-40.....	540	17:1.....	526	24:29-31.....	305, 367
12:39.....	517	17:1-13.....	247	24:32-34.....	157
12:39-41.....	315	17:11-13.....	249	24:36-44.....	157, 158, 367
12:47-50.....	511, 601	17:2.....	493, 610	24:37.....	769, 794
Chapter 13.....	354, 356, 616	17:3.....	248, 671	24:42.....	184, 592
13:1-9.....	338	18:2-4.....	319	24:45.....	616
13:6.....	340	18:21-35.....	360	24:45-51.....	201, 277, 368
13:11.....	38, 337, 395	18:22.....	362	24:48.....	378
13:18-23.....	339, 729	18:35.....	361	24:48, 49.....	216, 370
13:19.....	504	19:29.....	229	24:51.....	95
13:20.....	287	19:30.....	93	25:1-13.....	233, 372
13:23.....	55, 744	20:17-19.....	120, 383	25:6.....	373
13:24, 30, 41-43.....	120, 587	21:1-11.....	325	25:12.....	373
13:24-30.....	343, 365	21:18, 19.....	349	25:14.....	165, 614, 744
13:28-30.....	344, 345	21:28-32.....	362	25:14-30.....	61, 360, 376
13:30, 43.....	345	21:43.....	51, 54, 253	25:21.....	379, 436, 746
13:30, 49, 50.....	358	.....	339, 364	25:23.....	469
13:31, 32.....	346	22:1-14,	104, 235, 364	25:28-30.....	95
13:31, 33.....	550	22:2-5.....	105	25:30.....	94, 196
13:33.....	349, 350, 453	22:5, 6.....	370	25:31.....	741
.....	504, 632, 635	22:6, 7.....	105	25:31-46.....	98, 224, 684
13:37-43.....	344	22:8-14.....	107	25:41.....	97
13:38.....	342, 646, 792	22:12-14.....	469	25:41, 46.....	701
13:39.....	807	22:13.....	94	26:3-5, 14.....	383
13:39-42.....	133	22:14.....	108, 283, 366	26:14-16.....	199
13:41, 42.....	701	22:30.....	182, 447	26:27b-29.....	521
13:41-43.....	698	22:37.....	592	26:39.....	719
13:44.....	353, 646	23:13.....	36, 165, 343, 350	26:56.....	544
13:45, 46.....	355	23:13, 14.....	341	26:62, 63.....	322
13:47-50.....	357	23:13-15.....	503	27:9, 10, 28, 29.....	199
13:47-51.....	365	23:31-36.....	785	27:20.....	410
15:13, 14.....	345	23:37-39.....	383	27:35,51-53.....	165
15:24.....	518	24:1-31.....	158	27:45, 46, 57-60.....	31
16:1-3.....	156	24:3.....	157, 369	27:51.....	493
16:6.....	350, 550	24:13, 14.....	313	27:57-61.....	799
16:15-19.....	492	24:14.....	165, 657, 681	28:2.....	542
16:18.....	165	24:15.....	162, 297	28:18-20.....	370
16:21.....	120, 133, 383	24:15, 16.....	183, 449	28:19.....	114

28:19, 20.....318	17:31-33.....194	6:2-6, 10, 11, 14.....525
Book of Mark	17:32.....193	6:15-21.....528
4:11.....395	18:8.....58, 225, 275, 338	6:21.....530
5:1, 13.....788	.....507, 535	6:26.....527
5:1-20.....788	18:16, 17.....729	6:27.....326, 527
8:38.....335	18:18-25.....484	6:35.....325, 527
9:42-48.....96, 97	19:11-13.....744	6:48.....350
10:14.....319	19:12-15.....55	6:51.....325
16:1.....200	19:12-27.....380	6:53.....215
Book of Luke.....61	19:13.....25	6:53-58.....527
1:31-33.....300	19:17.....702	6:63.....42, 189, 573, 714
1:32, 33.....467	19:27.....95	.....739, 789, 798
2:7.....53	21:24.....651	7:37.....327
4:4.....327	21:29.....661	7:39.....34
4:28-30.....120	22:31, 32.....429	8:12.....235, 516
5:16.....719	22:44.....719	8:23, 24.....566
6:20, 24.....484	23:21.....410	8:31.....344
8:1-3.....788	23:43, 46.....31, 799	8:37.....344
8:14.....341	24:15, 31, 36.....543	8:43-45, 47.....786
8:16-18.....44	24:39.....447	8:44.....344
8:30, 31.....769	Book of John	8:58.....514
8:30-33.....666	1:1.....126	9:1-11, 14.....531
8:31a.....788	1:1-4.....463	9:4, 5.....532
9:62.....171	1:1-5.....210, 514	9:11, 27, 30-33, 38.....532
10:1-19.....518	1:4.....516	9:22.....533
11:31.....243	1:14.....165, 514, 527, 603	10:30.....514
12:15.....567	1:18.....218	11:1-7, 17.....535
12:15-21.....482	2:1.....520	11:3.....535
12:16-21.....567	2:1-11.....519	11:4-7, 11b.....134
12:35-48.....93	2:18-21.....539	11:6.....535
12:41-48.....369	3:3.....494, 544, 596	11:23-26.....535, 536
12:42.....703	3:5.....43, 545, 546	11:32-39, 41-44.....535
12:45-48.....94, 702	3:7.....740	11:41, 42.....538
13:24-30.....374	3:16, 17.....115, 354	12:13.....410
13:24-29.....586	3:19.....286	12:26.....631
13:34.....690	4:15.....525	12:42, 43.....533
14:15-24.....104	4:23.....592	12:46.....44, 427
16:22.....31	4:24.....39, 584	13:8, 10.....232
17:20, 21, 24.....17	4:46-50.....522	13:34, 35.....618, 753
17:26, 27, 30.....183	4:48.....517, 521	14:1-4, 6.....300, 611
17:26-30.....795	5:1-15.....523	14:2a-4.....381
17:28-33.....192	5:24.....32, 39, 58	14:6.....514
	5:25-29.....447	14:7, 9.....514

8:29.....123, 231	2:9-16.....736	15:3.....133
9:10.....195	2:10.....45	15:3-5.....406
10:14-18.....737	2:13, 14.....60	15:17-19.....596
10:15.....581	2:14.....19	15:20, 23.....681
10:17.....171, 329, 440, 510	3:8.....85	15:23.....165
.....582, 590, 594, 729, 735	3:9-15.....396, 741	15:24-26, 28.....705
11:11.....315, 393	3:11-15.....52, 93, 591	15:24-28.....149, 151, 466
11:16-25.....230	3:12.....277, 612	15:25.....144, 727
11:18, 23, 25, 26.....393	3:13.....318	15:42-44a.....38
11:25.....397	3:13-15.....317	15:42-49.....131
11:28-32.....331	3:16.....34, 592	15:45.....108
11:29.....34, 121, 394	3:16, 17.....327, 510	15:49.....152
12:1, 2.....26, 391, 426, 716	4:1.....395, 592	15:51.....395
12:1-8.....407, 471	4:1, 2.....369	15:51-53.....446
12:2.....32, 572, 594, 615	4:12.....462	15:51-57.....108, 109
12:6.....378, 379	5:1-5.....453	15:52.....543
12:6-8.....392	6:9.....327	15:56.....387
12:10-13.....511	6:2.....491	Book of 2 Corinthians...404
12:12c.....726	6:2, 3.....398, 609, 645	1:9, 10.....404
12:12-14.....335	6:11.....403	1:21.....234
12:17-19.....333	6:19.....34	2:15.....386
13:1, 2.....553	9:16-18.....592	3:13-18.....403
13:11.....388	9:24.....83, 587, 634	3:14-18.....728
13:14.....595	9:24-27.....49, 399, 621	3:17.....377
14:8.....433	9:25-27.....88	3:18.....591, 727
14:10b-12.....49	9:26.....84	4:3, 4.....405, 563, 728
Book of 1 Corinthians...395	9:27.....170, 400	4:4.....44, 54
1:1, 9.....402	10:1-5.....470	4:6.....732
1:4-7.....508	10:1-11.....21	4:16-18.....389
1:17-19.....393	10:4.....492	4:17.....404
1:18.....37	10:6-12.....401, 471	5:5.....33
1:22.....517, 671	10:11.....101, 173, 212, 214	5:6-8.....31
1:26.....572	10:12.....499	5:9, 10.....49
1:31.....394	10:13.....487, 721	5:9-11.....407
2:4, 5, 7, 8.....394	10:13a.....263, 401, 434	5:10.....31, 37, 55, 165
2:5, 11b-13.....733	10:32.....117	.....365, 368, 604, 741
2:6-8.....497, 787	12:1-11.....377, 378	5:11.....61
2:7.....337, 395, 592	13:1-13.....512	5:15-21.....408
2:7, 8.....422, 440	13:4-8.....599	5:17.....120, 121, 165, 805
2:7-10.....498	13:12.....218, 626	5:19.....419
2:9.....395	13:13.....588, 597, 809	5:20.....592
2:9-13.....793	14:40.....115	

5:21.....	37	1:7-12.....	26	4:4-6.....	423
6:2.....	409	1:9.....	337, 395	4:6.....	383
6:4-10.....	408	1:10.....	116, 123	4:7.....	377
7:10a.....	320	1:13.....	647	4:8-10.....	31
9:6-8.....	409	1:13, 14.....	33, 354, 372, 494	4:9.....	423
11:3, 4, 13-15.....	580, 581	1:15-18.....	435	4:11-14.....	734
11:4.....	581	1:15-19.....	24	4:17.....	436
12:2, 3.....	423	1:16-18.....	732	4:20-24.....	714
12:2-4.....	31	1:17, 18.....	33	4:22-24.....	424
12:9.....	438	1:18, 19.....	419, 595	4:22.....	740
12:9, 10.....	323	1:18b.....	620	422b.....	789
Book of Galatians ..	385, 412	1:22, 23.....	121	4:24.....	120, 165, 592
2:14c-21.....	414	2:1.....	30, 32, 233, 789	4:30.....	592
2:20.....	573	2:1, 2, 4, 5.....	494	5:1-21.....	406
3:1-11.....	414	2:1, 5, 8, 9, 12.....	39, 40	5:8.....	334, 427
3:2-7, 10-14.....	388	2:2.....	115	5:9.....	593
3:5, 6.....	751	2:4, 5.....	499	5:17.....	737
3:6, 7, 29.....	186	2:4-7.....	329, 420	5:18-20.....	35
3:17, 19-24.....	415	2:5, 8, 9.....	422	5:22-32.....	121
3:19.....	388	2:5.....	740	5:25-32.....	337
3:26-29.....	120, 121, 762	2:6, 7.....	121	5:26.....	533
3:29...17, 187, 196, 226, 516		2:7.....	620	5:26, 27.....	717
4:6.....	34, 377	2:8.....	33, 34, 386, 746	5:32.....	395
4:6, 7.....	415	2:8, 9.....	31, 39, 420	6:5-9.....	460
4:9-11.....	416	2:8-10.....	740	6:10.....	578, 754, 789, 807
4:30, 31.....	416	2:10.....	120, 421, 799	6:10, 11.....	495
4:30.....	189	2:12.....	121, 122	6:10-18.....	577
5:1, 4, 5.....	417	3:1.....	592	6:11, 16.....	808
5:16.....	267, 593, 715	3:2.....	116	6:11.....	16
5:16-18.....	573	3:3-6.....	337	6:11-13.....	263, 789
5:17.....	789, 798	3:5, 6.....	121	6:12.....	115, 116, 300, 423
5:19.....	417, 745	3:6.....	421	.....	428, 564, 765, 807
5:19-25.....	269	3:8.....	746	6:14-19.....	504
5:22.....	328, 334, 401, 406	3:8-11.....	498	6:18.....	592, 724
.....	419, 437, 469, 579, 593	3:9.....	440	Book of Philippians ..	430
5:24, 25; 6:8.....	574	3:9, 10.....	422	1:3.....	757
6:9.....	168, 745	3:9-11.....	101	1:9.....	592
6:9, 10.....	418	3:10.....	563	1:9, 19.....	723
6:10.....	753	3:14-19.....	599	1:21.....	431
6:15.....	120	3:19.....	395, 396	1:27.....	400
Book of Ephesians ..	385, 418	4:1-6.....	716	1:27-29.....	451
1:3.....	806			1:29.....	432, 592

2:3.....	617	2:8, 9.....	441	Chapter 5.....	450
2:12.....	59	2:8-10.....	320	5:2-6.....	448
2:12b.....	130, 592	2:14.....	442	5:3.....	450
2:12b, 13.....	434, 740	2:16.....	785	5:4-6.....	371
2:14-16.....	434	2:16-22.....	443	5:5-8.....	45
3:5.....	122	3:1, 2.....	570	5:7-10.....	582
3:10.....	433	3:2-4.....	443	5:8.....	582, 596
3:10, 11.....	433	3:5.....	570	5:17.....	719
3:11.....	108	3:6.....	592	5:20, 21.....	592
3:12.....	400	3:9-11.....	121, 122	5:21.....	491
3:12-14.....	499	3:10.....	391	5:23.....	29, 40, 386, 450
3:13.....	172	3:12.....	436, 569	.....	798
3:13a, 14.....	718, 756	3:12-14, 16.....	437	5:23, 24.....	359
3:14.....	83, 109	3:12-15.....	362		
3:17, 20-4:1.....	88	3:12-17.....	443		
3:18, 19.....	571	3:16.....	737		
3:20.....	121, 144, 435	3:16, 17.....	35		
3:20, 21.....	38, 67	3:22-4:1.....	462		
4:5-7.....	579	3:23.....	406		
4:6.....	724	3:24.....	23		
4:6, 7.....	435, 750	4:2-4.....	724		
4:13.....	326	4:5.....	436		
4:19, 20.....	435	4:22-25.....	436		
Book of Colossians.....	435	Book of 1 Thessalonians		Book of 2 Thessalonians	445
1:3-5.....	435	.....	385, 445	.....	445
1:9.....	732	1:6, 7.....	445	1:3-5.....	450
1:9, 10.....	508, 592	2:13.....	445	1:6-10.....	451
1:9-12.....	725	2:14.....	383	1:9.....	99
1:9-14.....	25, 436	2:19.....	595	1:11, 12.....	452
1:15-18.....	440	2:19, 20.....	87, 621	2:3-8.....	297
1:15-20.....	463	3:3.....	489	2:4.....	303, 650
1:16.....	13, 126	4:3.....	445	2:7.....	305
1:26.....	395	4:8.....	446	2:7, 8.....	450
1:26, 27.....	337, 498	4:13, 14.....	596	2:9-12.....	450
1:26-28.....	441	4:13ff.....	31, 87	3:13-15.....	451
1:27.....	415, 416, 592, 595	4:13-18.....	49, 108		
1:28.....	746	4:15-17.....	375, 446		
2:6.....	731, 800	4:16, 17.....	146, 368, 607		
2:8.....	16	4:16-18.....	165		

Book of 1 Timothy.....452	Book of Titus 456	3:1.....121
1:1.....596	1:10, 11.....456	3:7-11.....21, 147
1:8, 9.....388	1:13-16.....457	3:10, 11.....471
1:12-17.....384	2:11-14.....458	3:14.....176
2:3, 4.....359	2:12, 13.....592	3:16-4:2, 11-13.....730
2:14.....176	2:13.....24, 758	4:1.....14, 59, 232, 472
3:16.....395, 515	2:13, 14.....594	4:1-7, 9.....128
4:1.....549, 560, 795	3:1.....557	4:1-7.....542
4:1, 2.....454	3:5-7.....458	4:2.....64, 731
4:1, 12.....466	Book of Philemon.....459	4:9.....14
4:1-3.....162	1:13.....459	4:9-11.....47
4:6.....592	Book of Hebrews.....463	4:11.....14, 592
4:12, 13, 16.....335	Chapter 1, 2.....563	4:12.....29, 39, 509, 527
6:6-10.....481	1:1.....466	.....733, 798
6:9, 10.....120	1:1-4.....463	4:12, 13.....20, 583, 625
Book of 2 Timothy.....452	1:1-14.....115	4:13.....472
1:15.....429	1:5, 6.....115	4:14ff.....51
2:3-5.....453	1:7.....771	5:7-9.....721
2:11-13...298, 464, 455, 456	1:13, 14.....771	5:12.....472
2:13.....34	1:14.....38, 467, 477, 604	5:12-14.....38, 734
2:14.....34	Chapter 2.....496	5:13.....473
2:22.....329	2:1-4.....468	5:13, 14.....327
2:23-26.....576	2:2, 3.....55	5:13-6:1.....201
3:1-5.....162	2:3.....63, 196	5:13-6:2.....407, 629
3:5-8.....332	2:5.....645	5:14.....20, 491
3:8.....767	2:7.....464	6:1, 2.....114
3:11-15.....333	2:10.....241	6:1-3.....735
3:15-17.....592	2:14-18.....466	6:4.....506
3:16, 17.....20, 59, 737	2:17.....37	6:4-6.....473, 735
4:1.....463, 592	Chapter 3, 4.....146	6:7.....809
4:3-5.....454		6:10-12, 26.....475
4:7, 8.....50, 84, 87, 170		6:11, 12.....481
.....328, 400, 454		6:11, 18-20.....594
4:8.....636		6:19.....592
4:12.....463		6:19, 20.....465
4:18.....455		7:11.....327

1:8b, 9.....589	4:10, 11.....390	3:11-13.....513, 705
1:9.....39, 171, 493, 798	4:12.....610	3:17.....494
1:9, 10, 12.....40	4:12-19.....263	3:17, 18.....513
1:10-12.....497	4:15, 16.....501	Book of 1 John.....513, 545
1:11b.....92	4:16.....18	1:1-3.....463, 516
1:13.....578	4:19.....462	1:7-9.....233
1:13-16.....498, 510	5:2-4.....86, 501, 621	1:8-10.....548
1:14-16.....326	5:6.....720, 752	1:9...51, 361, 417, 424, 466
1:15.....592	5:7.....750	1:9-2:1.....592
1:15, 16.....714	5:8, 9.....258, 502, 576	1:9, 10.....754
1:17.....499, 592	5:9, 10.....485	1:10.....233
1:18, 19.....231, 583, 592	5:10.....717	2:2.....31, 37
1:24.....661	Book of 2 Peter.....502	2:3-5.....18
2:1, 2.....397	1:2-4.....506	2:3-6.....374
2:1-3.....500	1:2, 3.....509	2:5.....547, 562, 615
2:2.....729	1:3.....731	2:15-17...341, 425, 566, 593
2:4.....634	1:5.....401, 406, 601	2:20.....233
2:4-6.....625	1:5-9.....507	2:26, 27.....617
2:5.....405	1:10, 11.....23, 513	2:27.....34, 60, 733
2:9.....500, 617, 647	1:16-19.....248	2:29.....326, 547
2:9, 10.....121	1:19.....210, 427, 509, 585	3:2.....447
2:9-12.....428	1:19-21.....113, 610	3:2, 3.....24, 596
2:11.....790	1:20, 21.....59, 764	3:7.....234, 327, 592
2:11, 12.....456, 573	2:1.....17, 503	3:7, 8.....546
2:13-15.....553	2:1-3.....348, 351	3:7-9.....547
2:13-3:1.....593	2:2-4.....504	3:8, 9.....789
2:18-20.....461	2:4...182, 552, 666, 668, 769	3:9.....546, 557
2:20b, 21.....800	2:5.....737	3:10.....600
2:20-25.....332	2:6.....552	3:11, 12.....760
2:21.....171, 432, 461, 489	2:8.....127	3:14-18.....600
2:24a.....30	2:10.....553	4:1.....491, 592
2:25.....334	2:11.....553	4:1-6.....792
3:8.....750	2:13c-15.....347, 552	4:2.....604
3:9b.....500	2:15, 16.....555	4:3.....795
3:14-17...271, 324, 332, 501	2:17.....95, 560	4:7.....592
3:15.....592, 594	2:18-20.....347	4:7, 8.....511, 548
3:18-22.....422	2:20-22.....475	4:8-11.....599
3:19, 20.....770, 771	2:18, 20b, 22.....505, 506	4:10.....31, 37
4:1.....592	3:3.....216	4:20.....490
4:1, 2.....489	3:3, 4.....370	4:20, 21.....601
4:7.....501, 722	3:4.....202, 348, 355	5:1, 4.....548
4:8.....810	3:5-9.....13	5:1-3.....425
4:10.....501, 592	3:8.....15, 799	5:3.....180, 439, 601, 615

5:3, 4.....444	1:7b, 9-11.....606	3:14-22.....53
5:3-5.....169, 326	1:7-10.....165	3:16.....430
5:18.....548	1:10.....143, 308, 608, 607	3:17.....286, 337, 352
5:19.....563, 807	.....639	.....504, 568, 807
11:21, 32b.....535	1:11-17.....608	3:20.....352
	1:12, 20.....644	3:21.....93, 209, 240, 300
	1:13.....610, 640	.....522, 637, 704, 821
Book of 2 John.....516	1:13-16.....288	3:21, 22-4:5.....124
7-11.....411, 624	1:13ff.....49	Chapter 4.....612, 642, 643
8.....229	1:17-19.....611	4:1.....610
9.....514	1:19.....624	4:1-3.....642
9-11.....793	1:20.....90, 609, 663	4:2, 3.....288
	Chapter 2.....385, 429	4:4, 5.....643
	Chapter 2, 3.....52, 53, 57, 88	4:5b.....609
Book of Jude.....347, 475	.....169, 641, 802	4:6-10.....644
.....502, 547, 559, 792, 793	2:1-7.....615	4:6b.....741
4.....550, 786, 794	2:4.....616	4:10.....90, 806
5.....552	2:4, 5.....469	Chapter 5.....144, 236, 645
6.....182, 552	2:5, 11.....57	5:5.....156, 207
6, 7.....770	2:7.....300, 618, 708, 802	5:5-7.....238
8.....553	2:7b.....89	5:6.....274
8, 13.....795	2:8-11.....620	5:8, 9.....237
8-10.....581	2:10.....86, 621	5:8-10.....683
9.....553	2:10b.....469, 623, 802	5:8b.....725
10-13.....95	2:11.....97, 624, 700, 802	5:10.....647
11.....553	2:12-17.....622	Chapter 6.....644, 648
12.....558	2:14.....555, 623	Chapter 6-19.....165, 647
12, 13.....558	2:16.....624	6:1.....669
14.....129, 185, 560, 737, 764	2:17.....91, 625, 802	6:1, 2.....649
14, 15.....181	2:18-29.....626	6:2-8.....165
16-19.....352	2:26, 27a.....90	6:3, 4.....650
20, 21.....796	2:26-28.....803	6:5, 6.....652
20-22.....561	2:28.....90	6:7, 8.....655
	3:1-6.....629	6:9c.....654
Book of Revelation.....14, 162	3:3.....630	6:10, 11.....655, 663
.....251, 440, 603, 639	3:4, 5.....631	6:12, 13.....655
Chapter 1-3.....52, 801	3:5.....39, 92, 609, 803	6:15, 16.....659
Chapter 1-5.....355	3:7-13.....632	6:17-20.....656
1:1.....450, 640, 710	3:12.....92, 658, 671	Chapter 7-12.....679
1:1-3.....603	3:12, 21.....803	7:1, 8.....165
1:1b, 4, 5.....604	3:14-21.....635	7:1-8.....671
1:3.....49, 113, 592		7:1-9, 14a.....654
1:7.....120, 383, 605		

7:3.....	634	Chapter 12.....	254, 700	13:11.....	301, 677
7:3a, 4.....	657	12:1.....	90, 663	13:11-15.....	785
7:4-8.....	207	12:1-4, 7, 12.....	673	13:13.....	675
7:9.....	693	12:3.....	302, 675	13:14.....	293
7:9, 10, 14a.....	659	12:4-6.....	680	13:14, 15.....	294
7:14-16.....	657	12:5.....	674	13:15.....	165
7:17.....	322	12:5, 6.....	680	13:16.....	635
Chapter 8.....	661	12:7.....	165, 301, 666	13:16, 17.....	653
8:1.....	648, 659	12:7, 9, 13, 17.....	674	13:18.....	302
8:7.....	661	12:12b.....	301, 666	Chapter 14.....	679
8:7-9:21.....	165	12:14.....	183	14:1-5.....	671, 682
8:8.....	662	12:14d.....	530	14:1-7.....	682
8:9-11.....	677	12:17.....	255	14:1-12.....	684
8:10.....	665	Chapter 13.....	676	14:3-5.....	681
8:10a, 11.....	663	13:1.....	302, 675, 794	14:4.....	659
8:12.....	664	13:2.....	313, 675	14:4b.....	681
Chapter 9.....	661	13:1, 2, 5, 7.....	307	14:8.....	692
9:1, 2.....	664	13:2, 3.....	676	14:8-12.....	682
9:3-11.....	666	13:2-4.....	697	14:9-11.....	652
9:4.....	658	13:3, 4.....	296	14:12.....	704
9:6.....	788	13:4.....	676	14:14-16.....	165, 682
9:11.....	699			14:17-20.....	165, 684
9:14-16, 17, 18.....	667			14:20.....	699
9:15.....	788			Chapter 15.....	661
Chapter 10.....	670				
10:1.....	643				
10:1, 7.....	670				
10:4.....	640				
Chapter 11.....	671, 677				
11:1-6.....	165				
11:2.....	648				
11:3.....	671				
11:3-6.....	249				
11:5, 8, 11-13.....	672				
11:12a, 13.....	673				
11:15.....	144, 300, 660				
11:15-19.....	165				
11:15, 19.....	669, 690				
11:15c, d.....	223, 671				

Chapter 16.....	661	18:1-24.....	165, 224	20:4c.....	659
16:2.....	661	18:2a, 3, 7, 8.....	661	20:4-6.....	109, 224, 700, 701
16:3.....	662	18:2a, 3, 20, 24.....	692	20:6.....	97, 559
16:4-6.....	663	18:11, 12, 14-17a.....	693	20:7.....	298, 726
16:8, 9.....	664	18:21.....	293	20:7a.....	50
16:10, 11.....	665, 667	18:24.....	691	20:7, 10.....	704
16:12b-16.....	667	Chapter 19.....	695	20:10.....	726
16:12c.....	668	19:2, 7-9.....	693	20:11ff.....	32
16:14.....	788	19:6.....	165	20:11-15.....	51, 109, 702
16:14c.....	684	19:7.....	121, 647	.....	705, 741
16:14, 16.....	165	19:7, 8.....	234, 282	20:13.....	706
16:15.....	741	19:7-9.....	366, 520, 522	20:14.....	57, 97, 621
16:16.....	668	19:8.....	39, 278, 365	21:1, 2.....	151
16:17.....	660	.....	579, 631	Chapter 21-22:5.....	165
16:17-21.....	669	19:11.....	165, 325	21:2, 9a.....	154
Chapter 17.....	676, 686, 688	19:11-17.....	699	21:2-8.....	706
.....	689	19:11, 17-21.....	165	21:5.....	467
Chapter 17-19.....	687	19:11-20:6.....	645	21:6.....	707
17:1-6.....	687	19:11-21.....	265	21:8b.....	97, 701
17:3.....	307	19:12.....	254, 288	21:9-22:5.....	707
17:5.....	294	19:14, 15.....	684	21:10.....	526, 662
17:6.....	690	19:17-21.....	165	21:15-17.....	709
17:9, 10.....	676	19:19.....	305	21:22, 23.....	708
17:9b.....	526	19:19, 20.....	304	22:1-3.....	467
17:15.....	663	Chapter 20.....	699, 704	22:2.....	709
17:16.....	295	20:1.....	666	22:3-5.....	219
17:16, 17.....	691	20:1-3, 4, 7, 8-15.....	165	22:3b.....	708
17:18.....	689			22:6.....	732
Chapter 18.....	691			22:6-21.....	710
				22:7, 12, 20.....	713
				22:12.....	85
				22:12, 13.....	99
				22:12-17.....	711
				22:16.....	90
				22:18, 19.....	712

