**JUDE**

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**Chapter Three**

**Falling Away From the Faith**

*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* [licentiousness], *and* [even] *denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ*.

(**Jude 4**)

The “apostates” in **Jude 4** are *false teachers* who are often erroneously thought of as unsaved individuals. However, understanding these false teachers to be unsaved has no basis whatsoever in Scripture. In fact, such a view would militate against that which Jude has to say about false teachers. The context in **Jude** (continuing into v. **5**) and the corresponding section in **2 Peter** (**2:1-3**; cf.vv. **19-21**) both demonstrate conclusively that the unsaved are not in view at all.

**Jude 5** has to do with the Israelites under Moses, who were *saved out of the land of Egypt*,but *afterward were destroyed*.Not only had these Israelites *appropriated* the blood of the paschal lambs but they had also been *delivered* from Egypt (always a type of *the world* in Scripture).

In the antitype, this has to do with individuals who, as well, have both *appropriated* the blood of the Passover Lamb and have been *delivered* from the things of this world. Thus, the antitype can only have to do with Christians under Christ (ref.“. . . *having escaped the corruption that is in the world* . . . *have escaped the pollutions of the world* . . . .” [**2 Peter 1:4**; **2:20**;cf. **Hebrews 3:1-4:16**]).

Then, continuing with the antitype, **Jude 5** points to *the destruction* awaiting many of these individuals, awaiting numerous Christians (not pertaining to eternal life [an impossibility] but pertaining to the subject matter at hand, as in the type — the inheritance set before them [inheriting as co-heirs with Christ], in another land [a heavenly land], within the theocracy [the coming kingdom of Christ]). The reason for this *destruction* awaiting numerous Christians (a destruction that will be seen in their failure to realize the goal of their calling) is revealed in the context in **Jude** (vv. **3**, **4**) and in the Old Testament type (**Numbers 13:21-14:9**, **27-37**). *Destruction* will occur, exactly as in the type, because of “unfaithfulness” (resulting in *a* *falling away*, *apostasy*).

The companion epistle to **Jude**, **2 Peter**, clearly states that these false teachers had been allowed to move from *gnosis* into *epignosis*, from “knowledge” into a “mature knowledge” (cf.**2:1-3**, **19-21**; “knowledge” in v. **20** is *epignosis* [mature knowledge] in the Greek text). Operating in the spiritual realm is possible *only for the saved*, whether dealing with *gnosis* (**1 Corinthians 2:14**), or with *epignosis* (**2 Peter 2:20**). The unsaved are spiritually dead (**Ephesians 2:1**) and can no more move about in the spiritual realm than can a physically dead person move about in the physical realm.

An unsaved person knows only the soulical nature; he lacks a redeemed spirit into which the Word of God can flow; and he lacks the indwelling Holy Spirit who can take this Word and lead him into all truth — turning the *Water* into *Wine*,moving from *gnosis* to *epignosis*.All things associated with the new nature are *totally alien* to unsaved man, and any acquisition of knowledge relates to his soulical (natural) nature and could never be associated with *epignosis*.

The widespread tendency to read into **2 Peter** and **Jude** what is not there (*unregenerate* false teachers) has served only to cloud the true issue and rob both epistles of their correct message. The unsaved existing in the midst of Christians today can presentboth an issue and problem, but any issue and problem presented by the unsaved can only be viewed as of little consequence compared with the issue and problem which apostate regenerate teachers existing in the midst of Christians today present, dealt with in both **2 Peter** and **Jude**.

As previously seen, the false teachers in these two epistles can only be viewed as Christians who have *apostatized from the faith*,become *false teachers*,and now *stand in the way* of those who *contend* *earnestly* (KJV: *are striving*)“*for* [with respect to, in the good contest of] *the faith*.”

Standing in the Way

The thought of false teachers standing in the way of those who *contend* *earnestly* (*are striving*)in “*the good contest of the faith*” is very similar to the actions of the scribes and Pharisees during the time Jesus was on the earth, prior to His crucifixion. The scribes and Pharisees “*shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men* [‘before men,’ ‘in the presence of men’]” (**Matthew 23:13**). They were not going in themselves, and they didn’t want anyone else to go in either. They stood in the way of those who were *striving* to enter.

No other religious group in Israel received a greater condemnation at the hands of Christ than did the scribes and Pharisees. Over and over Christ uttered the condemnatory words:

*Woe to you*, *scribes and Pharisees*, *hypocrites*! (**Matthew 23:13-16**, **23**, **25**, **27**, **29**)

He called them “*fools and blind* . . . *serpents* . . . *vipers*,” and likened them to “*whitewashed tombs* (KJV: ‘*whited sepulchers*’),” *which indeed appear beautiful outwardly*, *but inside are full of dead men*’*s* *bones and all uncleanness*” (**Matthew 23:17**, **19**, **24**, **26**, **27**, **33**).

Even the Sadducees, although spoken against for their unbelief and often placed in the same category with the Pharisees, were never the recipients of such condemnatory words as those recorded in **Matthew** chapter **twenty-three**.

What made the difference? Why were *the woe*’*s* and *the words of condemnation* directed toward the scribes and Pharisees (the keepers and teachers of the Law, the fundamental legalists of that day) instead of the Sadducees (a group not holding to the exact letter of the Law [e.g., **Acts 23:7**, **8**], who could be looked upon as the liberals of that day)? The answer is obvious. The ones who claimed to believe the Scriptures to the very letter (the scribes and Pharisees) not only exhibited an unbelief greater than that of the Sadducees but this was done in an open, hypocritical manner, producing dire consequences.

The scribes and Pharisees, the legalistic keepers and teachers of the Law, were, by far, the largest religious party in Israel. They, by their very numbers, controlled the religious life in Israel. They had not only rejected the message and the Messenger — the kingdom of the heavens being proclaimed by Israel’s Messiah — but they had stood in the way of others heeding the message and receiving the Messenger. They had “*shut up the kingdom of the heavens*” in the presence of those in Israel (**Matthew 23:13**).

This resulted in *a widespread unbelief* in Israel, climaxed by the nation’s *rejection* of the King and the Kingdom, followed by *the* *crucifixion* of the King Himself. Thus, the Scribes and Pharisees were directly responsible for that which occurred in Israel when Christ came the first time, which accounts for Christ’s condemnatory words directed toward them at the climax of His ministry, immediately preceding the events surrounding Calvary (**Matthew 23:1ff**).

The same basic thing exists in Christendom today relative to what is often termed the clergy and the laity. And the Word of God concerns itself far more with warnings directed toward those who follow in the paths of the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees — the apostates and those who do their bidding — than it does with warnings directed toward those who have never become associated with “*the faith*.”

And the basic issue today is the same as it was over 1,900 years ago — the offer of the kingdom of the heavens on the one hand, and certain individuals seeking to subvert this offer on the other hand. False teachers, as their counterparts in Israel, are *shutting up* “*the kingdom of the heavens against men* [‘before men,’ ‘in the presence of men’].” They themselves are not going to enter into the kingdom; and their basic aim underlying all their pseudo systems of doctrine, whether they realize it or not, is to also prevent others from entering. They stand in the way of others, producing a widespread unbelief concerning the King and the Kingdom.

Sermon on the Mount

The mention of *false teachers* in **Jude** appears immediately following the exhortation *to contend earnestly* (*strive*)“with respect to the faith.” The parallel section to this, as we have seen, is **2 Peter** chapters **one** and **two**. Another parallel section that should prove profitable to consider at this time is the section devoted to “*false prophets*” in the latter part of what is commonly called “the Sermon on the Mount” (**Matthew 5-7**). In this discourse, delivered by Jesus to His disciples while in *a mountain* (alluding to “the kingdom” in view — “a mountain” in Scripture always signifies *a kingdom*), “*false prophets*” are mentioned immediately *after* an exhortation *to enter in* “*at the strait gate*” and immediately before a rejection of certain individuals for *entrance* “*into the kingdom of the heavens*” (**7:13-23**). The contextual setting provides the reason for the appearance of false prophets at this particular point in Scripture; and a study of this contextual setting in the light of related Scripture will clearly reveal that these false prophets are, as in **Jude 4**, *false teachers*,not unregenerate individuals alienated from God.

The Sermon on the Mount is a connected discourse dealing with *entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens*. This discourse is actually an exposition of **Matthew 5:20**:

*For I say to you* [Jesus’ disciples; cf.v. **2**], *that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*, *you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*.

Two things must ever be kept in mind when studying the Sermon on the Mount:

1. The message is to *the saved*,not the unsaved.
2. The subject matter at hand is *entrance into the kingdom*,not eternal salvation.

The Sermon on the Mount was delivered by Jesus to His disciples during the time when the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was still open to the nation of Israel. This message was delivered during the closing days of God’s past dealings with Israel and applied strictly to a people (Israelites) to whom the offer to occupy positions in the heavenly portion of the kingdom was being extended. However, after Israel’s rejection of this offer and the subsequent removal of *the heavenly part of the kingdom* from Israel (**Matthew 21:18-43**), the words of the Sermon on the Mount could no longer be applicable to this nation.

The Sermon on the Mount, dealing with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens, can be applicable only to those to whom the kingdom of the heavens *is being extended* (not ‘was’ being extended [in relation to Israel in time past], but ‘*is*’ *being extended* [in relation to another entity today]).

With this in mind, the present recipients of the promises and blessings associated with the kingdom of the heavens comprise an entirely “*new creation*” *in Christ*.This new creation, separate and distinct from Israel, was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected — *the heavenly part of the kingdom*.

And the words of the Sermon on the Mount, remaining applicable to individuals associated with entrance into the kingdom of the heavens, *must*, *accordingly*, *now apply to Christians*. The words of the Sermon on the Mount — following a reoffer of the kingdom to Israel and a second rejection by Israel (seen in the book of **Acts**) — can apply to no other group of individuals during the present dispensation.

Dangers Confronting Christians

**Matthew 7:13-23** records *two dangers* that confront all Christians during their present pilgrim walk. These dangers are produced by the actions of the false teachers (vv. **15-20**) and concern Christians basically in their relationship to the coming kingdom.

1. *The first danger* confronting Christians is “lack of effort” (vv. **13**, **14**).
2. *The second danger* confronting Christians is “performing works for the Lord, but not doing the will of the Lord [i.e., Christians running out ahead of the Lord, performing works themselves — using their own wisdom, ways, means, methods — rather than faithfully waiting on the Lord to perform works through them, under the power of the Spirit]” (vv. **21-23**).

(In the preceding respect, note, in **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**, the two types of works that will be manifested in that coming day when Christians appear before the judgment seat of Christ — “*gold*, *silver*, *precious stones*” on the one hand [works that will endure the fire]; “*wood*, *hay*, *straw*” on the other hand [works that will be burned by the fire].)

1) *Lack of Effort* (**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*

A parallel verse recorded in **Luke 13:24** states,

*Strive to enter through the narrow gate*, *for many*, *I say to you*, *will seek to enter and will not be able*.

The word “Strive” is the translation of the Greek word *agonizomai*,from which the English word “agonize” is derived (ref.Chapter 2 in this book). Effort — straining every muscle of one’s being — is to be expended as Christians strive to enter through this gate. Every weight and hindrance is to be *cast aside*, everything not associated with the race is to be counted for *naught*, as Christians “*press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (**Philippians 3:7-14**; **Hebrews 12:1**, **2**).

*Striving* in passages such as **1 Corinthians 9:25**; **1 Timothy 6:12**; **2 Timothy 4:7**; **Jude 3** is in “*the good contest of the faith*.” *Entrance into the kingdom* is in view in these passages, as in **Matthew 7:13**, **14** and **Luke 13:24**. Entering in “*by the narrow gate*” in **Matthew 7:13** requires *effort*, and related Scriptures reveal that this effort has to do with *striving in the race* set before Christians.

**Second Peter 1:11**, a verse showing the result of properly striving in the race, refers to *an abundant entrance* “*into the everlasting* [‘age-lasting’] *kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*.” The kingdom of the heavens and entrance into this kingdom comprise the subject matter at hand, which is the object of the race in all these verses.

The parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13:3-9**, **18-23** provides one of the best examples in Scripture showing how Christians are caused *to* *fail* in the race and *fall away* because of the ministry of false teachers. This parable concerns four types of Christians who are sown out in the world by the Lord Jesus Christ (the words, “*he who received seed*” [vv. **19**, **20**, **22**, **23**], should be translated, “*he who was sown*” [cf. vv. **37**, **38**]). These Christians are categorized as the ones sown “*by the wayside*,” the ones sown “*on stony places*,” the ones sown “*among thorns*,” and the ones sown “*on the good ground*.” Only the latter, the ones sown “*on the good ground*,” bring forth fruit. The other three types of Christians, for various revealed reasons, do not produce fruit.

The parable of the Sower in all its four parts concerns experiences in the lives of Christians who have both heard the word of the kingdom and been sown by the Lord Jesus Christ in various places out in the world, with a view to bringing forth fruit for the kingdom.

The second part of this parable concerns Christians sown upon “*stony places*” (vv. **5**, **6**, **20**, **21**); and, because of “*tribulation or persecution*” arising in their lives, these Christians fail to bring forth fruit. The “*tribulation*” and “*persecution*” are seen to be brought about “*because of the word* [‘*the word of the kingdom*’; cf.v. **19**].”

These represent those who hear and joyfully receive “*the word of the kingdom*,” finding themselves in a position to bring forth fruit when “*tribulation or persecution*” arises in their lives. Individuals responsible for bringing about “*tribulation*” or “*persecution*” in the lives of Christians sown upon “*stony places*” are said to cast a “stumbling block” in their path (the word “offended” [v. **21**, KJV] should literally be translated “stumbling block”).

In the parallel passage in **Luke 8:13**, this “stumbling block” cast before Christians is said to cause them to “*fall away*.” The Greek word translated “*fall away*” in this passage is *aphistemi*,the verb form of the word *apostasia,* from which the English word “apostasy” is derived. This is *a falling away*, *an apostasy,* “*from the faith*.”

Christians who have heard “*the word of the kingdom*” and have been placed out in the world, with a view of bringing forth fruit for the kingdom, are the ones engaged in *striving* “*in the good contest of the faith*.” These are the ones who are striving to enter in at the narrow gate. Those who cast a “stumbling block” in their pathway are none other than the false prophets/teachers of **Matthew 7:15-20**; **2 Peter 2:1-3**; **Jude 4**. And the ministry of those proclaiming a false message concerning the kingdom centers on seeking to prevent other Christians from bringing forth fruit by causing them *to turn away* from the “*word of the kingdom*,” *to fall away*.Such an act then results in fruit-bearing in an entirely different realm — the apostate teacher himself producing fruit (which could only be associated with “*wood*, *hay*, *straw*”), diametrically opposed to “*the word of the kingdom*.”

The apostates, by and through their ministry among Christians, produce other apostates (those caused to fall away through standing away from the faith). This is what is meant by the statement in **Matthew 7:20**: “*Therefore by their fruits you will know them*.” This verse has to do with identifying apostate Christians alone, not with the common, false concept of testing a person who claims to be saved (seeking to ascertain the reality or non-reality of his/her conversion) by watching for fruit.

Such a concept, as the preceding, is completely alien to Scripture. A person is placed in a position to bring forth fruit only *after he is saved*, and Scripture clearly teaches that he *may* or *may not* bring forth fruit, likened to “*gold*, *silver*, *and precious stones*.”

Whether a Christian bears such fruit or not is *never* set forth as a test for salvation, a criterion to show whether or not he has been saved. Those who promote such teachings are seeking to bring works over into an area where works *cannot* exist (**Romans 11:6**; cf.**Ephesians 2:8**, **9**).

Contrary to this entire false system of thought, Scripture teaches that there will be many Christians appearing at the judgment seat of Christ without one single good work to their credit (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15**). *Fruit-bearing* in **Matthew 7:15-20** pertains to “*a falling away*,” to “apostasy” — i.e., an apostate Christian producing fruit. The apostate Christian has *fallen away* “*from the faith*,” and he bears fruit, mainly, by causing other Christians (who are in a position to bring forth fruit for the kingdom) to follow his false teachings and also *fall away* “*from the faith*.” This is the warning set forth in **Matthew 7:15-20**.

2) *Performing Works*, *But* . . . (**Matthew 7:21-23**)

*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*!”

“Many” individuals to whom the offer to occupy positions of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom is presently being extended will, in that coming day, be rejected. **Matthew 7:21** is one of seven such statements in Scripture, teaching exclusion from the kingdom. The other six can be found in **Matthew 5:20**; **18:3**; **19:23**, **24**; **Luke 18:17**; **John 3:5**; **1 Corinthians 6:9**, **10**. Teachings relative to the Christian’s calling, his present responsibility, and his future accountability must be understood in the light of these statements.

A travesty in Scriptural interpretation today is the use of **Matthew 7:21-23** (or, for that matter, also vv. **13**, **14**, **24-27**) as a message directed to the unsaved, for this serves only to obscure the correct interpretation. These verses have to do, not with the message of salvation by grace, but with the Word of the Kingdom. These verses have to do *only* with the saved relative to their future entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens. Such should be clear to anyone who has not already decided contrariwise and is willing to accept that which *Scripture alone* teaches.

a)The words“*Lord*, *Lord*”(vv. **21**, **22**),uttered by individuals who are denied entrance into the kingdom, constitute an expression peculiarly characteristic of disciples. According to **1 Corinthians 12:3**, “*no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*.” An unsaved person, not in possession of the Holy Spirit, does not understand the things of the Spirit. These things are alien to his soulical nature (the only nature that he possesses). Jesus is not his Lord; and, apart from the Spirit of God, he does not, he cannot, so acknowledge Christ.

(An unsaved person can, in a meaningless way, utter these words [Jesus is Lord]; but he cannot acknowledge Jesus as His Lord, as seen in **Matthew 7:21**, **22**. He cannot do this apart from *his actions emanating from above*, *apart from being brought forth from above*. And actions of this nature would be possible *only for the saved* [cf. **Matthew 16:15-17**].)

b)A *three-part question* is asked by those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord in verse **twenty-two**, and the construction of this question in the Greek text (using the negative “*ou*,” governing all three parts) designates that a positive, rather than a negative, response was expected from the Lord. That is, the manner in which the question was asked reveals that these individuals expected to hear the Lord say: “Yes, you have prophesied in My name; Yes, you have cast out demons in My name; and Yes, you have performed many wonderful works in My name.”

These individuals had been proclaiming a message and performing works — even miraculous works — believing that these things were being done in the name of the Lord. However, the Lord’s response revealed that such was not the case at all. These individuals had, unknowingly, been deceived by the false teachers, with miraculous works emanating from the only source possible — *the demonic world*.As a result, Christ’s answer to their question (v. **23**) was not at all in keeping with the response which they expected.

1) *Prophesying in the name of the Lord* in this passage is simply proclaiming the truth concerning the Word of God. The meaning of the word for “prophesy” in the Greek text (*propheteuo*)is “to speak forth.” The meaning could go beyond this and refer to prophetic (futuristic) utterance itself, but that is not what the text and context are dealing with.

This is the same word (in its noun form [*prophetes*]) translated “*prophets*” in verse **fifteen**, as well as in **2 Peter 2:1**. Note that in **2 Peter 2:1** the “*false prophets*” are identified as “*false teachers*,” synonymous with the false teachers in **Jude**. This entire thought surrounds a servant of the Lord (who himself is an apostate, or has been misled by the apostates) teaching things that are not in accord with the Word of God and, thus, could not be taught in the Lord’s name.

2) *Casting out demons and doing many wonderful works*,supposedly in the name of the Lord, is perhaps best exemplified during the present time by the actions of those Christians involved in the Charismatic Movement, for this is exactly what these individuals are doing. The Charismatic Movement can be properly understood only in the light of Scripture. Seemingly it is a movement that exists because of the simple failure of Christians to understand the proper place that signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in the Word of God. However, the crux of the matter goes far beyond this. **Matthew 7:15-23** reveals an apostate element resulting from the ministry of false teachers associated with a movement of this nature.

Signs, wonders, and miracles, such as were in evidence during the earthly ministry of Christ and for the first several decades of the existence of the Church, are peculiarly related to two things:

1. Israel.
2. The Kingdom.

That would be to say, God *must* be dealing with *Israel* in relation to *the Kingdom* for signs, wonders, and miracles to be manifested.

Israel was dealt with in relation to the kingdom in the past (relative to the Old Testament theocracy and Christ’s offer of the kingdom of the heavens at His first coming), is not being dealt with in this manner today (during the present dispensation in which God is calling out a bride for His Son, with Israel set aside), but will be dealt with after this fashion in the future (the Tribulation period and the Messianic Era). Accordingly, signs, wonders, and miracles (associated with Israel and the kingdom) were in evidence in the past, cannot be in evidence today, but will be in evidence once again in the future.

Thus, there can be no current manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in the gospel accounts and the book of **Acts**. Those in the Charismatic Movement, claiming to be manifesting these signs during the present time, cannot possibly be doing so. That which is being seen in the movement today can be neither a continuation of, nor a restoration of the signs, wonders, and miracles evident during apostolic days.

The Charismatic Movement has been singled out because of the movement’s widespread influence in what is viewed as Christendom in the world today (crossing all denominational lines, Protestant and Catholic alike). But, to broaden the matter, suffice it to say, any manifestation of supernatural powers in the world today — in any movement, Christian or non-Christian — can have no association whatsoever with supernatural powers exhibited during apostolic times. Such powers, from a biblical standpoint, *cannot exist today*.

These powers were for *a time past*,and are reserved for *a time future* (during the Millennium, if not also during the Tribulation as well when God once again begins to deal with Israel immediately preceding the Messianic Kingdom [**Isaiah 35:1-6**]). Consequently, any movement in the world today purporting to exercise these powers is *not at all what it claims to be*.

Manifestations of supernatural powers in the world today are no indication that these powers emanate from God. One thing that is almost completely overlooked is the fact that Satan possesses supernatural powers that can be exhibited through man. Scripture associates the *working of Satan* with “*all power*, *signs*, *and lying wonders*” (**2 Thessalonians 2:9**, **10**). His efforts through the manifestations of his powers are always directed toward one goal — *to deceive*.He is introduced into affairs of the human race in this fashion, comprising *a first-mention principle* that remains constant throughout Scripture (**Genesis 3:1-7**; **Exodus 7:11**, **12**, **22**; **8:7**; **Matthew 24:24**; **Ephesians 4:14**; **1 Timothy 2:14**; **Revelation 13:13**, **14**). And the deception of individuals in **Matthew** chapter **seven** (vv. **21-23**) by the false teachers (vv. **15-20**) constitutes a warning to everyone involved in comparable activity today.

Signs, wonders, and miracles were in evidence during apostolic days as signs for Israel, calling the nation to repentance (**Matthew 10:1-8**; cf. **Matthew 4:23-25**; **8:1-9:38**). This was during a time when God was dealing with Israel in relation to the kingdom. The kingdom of the heavens was “*at hand*,” something that is not true at all today. Israel has been set aside, and the kingdom of the heavens is being offered to an entirely new entity, though the kingdom is not presently “*at hand*.”

Since that condition no longer exists, and the only kingdom now in existence on the earth is Satan’s kingdom, any present manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles would, of necessity, have to do with this kingdom. In this respect, individuals involved in any movement associated with signs, wonders, and miracles today are, in reality, producing works relating to a kingdom diametrically opposed to the kingdom of Christ; and any manifestation of supernatural power would have to emanate from that kingdom. Thus, it is no wonder that they are called *workers of iniquity* and will, in the coming day of reckoning, be denied entrance into the kingdom of Christ.

(For additional information concerning *signs, wonders, and miracles,* refer to the author’s book, From Acts to the Epistles, Chapter 1; or refer to the author’s three pamphlets titled, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles” [Parts 1-3].)

The words, “I never knew you” (v. **23**), referring to the supernatural works previously performed, have been misunderstood by many individuals over the years. In reality, God in His omniscience *knows everyone and everything*. Thus, all expressions of this nature in Scripture must be understood as *relative expressions*,pertaining to the subject matter at hand.

An expression of this nature used relative to eternal life, for example, would limit those whom God *knows* to the ones in possession of eternal life. God *knows* all the others (the unsaved), but not relative to eternal life.

However, the subject under discussion in **Matthew 7:21-23** is not eternal life at all. This subject has to do with “doing the will of the Lord” — resulting in *fruit-bearing —* with a view to *entrance into the kingdom*.The words, “*I never knew you*,” constitute *a relative expression* pertaining to the fact that the Lord did not know them concerning the works that they had performed; and, consequently, because of their lack of fruit, He also did not know them concerning entrance into the kingdom. These individuals did perform works, but these works were performed completely outside the will and purpose of the Lord, and He had nothing to do with these works.

Concluding Thoughts

The future judgment of Christians will be based solely on *works* (cf.**Matthew 16:27**; **1** **Corinthians 3:13-15**; **2 Corinthians 5:10**, **11**). Being approved for a crown before the judgment seat of Christ involves accomplishing the will of the Lord. This concerns faithfulness to the task/tasks that God has called each individual to perform, resulting in fruit-bearing.

Being rejected for a crown before the judgment seat of Christ involves the exact opposite — not accomplishing the will of the Lord. This concerns unfaithfulness to the task/tasks that God has called each individual to perform, resulting in a fruitless condition.

The reckoning in **Matthew 7:21-23** illustrates the latter — *a negative side* to the coming judgment of Christians, showing their rejection in that coming day because of *fruitlessness* during the present day.

The end of the present dispensation is to be marked by a rise in demonic activity, an increase in false teachers, and Christians being “*carried about with every wind of doctrine*,” being misdirected in every way possible. The tremendous growth of such activity ushers in the great apostasy of the end-time, which can only be expected to increase as the dispensation draws to a close.

The only recourse that Christians have during this day of apostasy is *the Word of God* and *the indwelling Holy Spirit* who can take the Word received into man’s saved human spirit and guide him “*into all truth*,” providing Christians with “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*.”