

Salvation Message

Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation

Introduced in Genesis, Realized in Revelation

**A Study about the Movement
of All Things in Scripture Toward
One Revealed Goal**

Arlen L. Chitwood

This book deals with material which should be *at the center of every pastor's ministry, constantly on the mind of every Christian.*

BUT, neither of the preceding is the case!

WHY?

And from a Biblical standpoint, the answer to that question is quite plainly stated in Scripture:

Very early in the dispensation, a woman placed leaven in three measures of meal (Matt. 13:33). And *THAT ONE ACT*, over time, has resulted in the existing situation in Christendom today, almost 2,000 years later — a situation which Christ foretold, among other places, in Luke 18:8b:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?”

The structure of the Greek text provides the answer: “*NO!*”

The Son of man *will NOT* find “the faith on the earth” — *i.e.*, being taught among or held by His people (Christians) — at the time of His return.

“The faith,” used in this manner, has a peculiar reference *to the Word of the Kingdom*, the message which the leaven has centered its attack upon and has all but destroyed, resulting in not only the absence of but the oft disdain for this message today.

This book, drawing from foundational material in Moses, succinctly covers this message dealt with throughout the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation. The same message, seen at the beginning in Genesis, is dealt with throughout — *to the Jew ALONE in the gospels (Matt. 10:5-8), to the Jew FIRST, and ALSO to the Greek in Acts (Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10), to Christians ALONE beyond Acts in the epistles (Acts 28:28; 1 Peter 2:9, 10), THEN realized in Revelation (Dan. 7:13, 14; Rom. 8:17-19; Rev. 11:15).*

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**The
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By the Same Author —

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

FOREWORD

Man talks about being eternally saved through faith in Christ, with “little regard” (often, “no regard”) for the Messianic Era (the Lord’s Day) which lies between the present time (Man’s Day) and the eternal ages (the Day of God).

BUT, Scripture presents matters from an entirely different standpoint. Scripture deals with salvation through faith in Christ *in relation to the 1,000-year Messianic Era (the Lord’s Day), NOT in relation to the endless ages beyond (the Day of God).*

This *is NOT* to say that salvation *DOES NOT* continue into the endless ages beyond the Messianic Era, for salvation *DOES* continue into these ages. Rather, this is to say that Scripture *DOESN’T* deal with salvation in this respect (aside from isolated instances, allowing man to put the complete word picture together).

This is set forth in the way Scripture begins, establishing a foundation upon which the remainder of Scripture rests. The complete story is told in a very succinct manner in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis, and the remainder of Scripture simply forms commentary, providing all the sinews, flesh, and skin to clothe the skeletal framework set forth at the beginning.

Go wrong at this beginning point, and you can *ONLY* stay wrong the rest of the way.

BUT, go right at this beginning point, and...

The seven chapters in this book, followed by four appendix articles, deal with the preceding issues — dealing with matters as seen in the whole of the New Testament, using an Old Testament base to begin.

Scripture begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth, the ruin of the earth (a province in God’s universal kingdom, reduced to a ruin because of the incumbent ruler’s [Satan’s] aspirations to “be like the Most High”), the restoration of the ruined earth (the ruined kingdom), and the creation of man to rule this restored domain (in the stead of Satan).

God's restoration of the earth occurred over six days time, with man created, on the sixth day, following the completion of this restoration work. *THEN* God rested from all His work on the seventh day (Gen. 1:1-2:3).

But Satan, the incumbent ruler which man was to replace, brought about man's fall, resulting in his ruin, which also resulted in a ruined condition of the material creation, the earth, once again (Gen. 3:1-18).

And the remainder of Scripture, resting on the foundation set forth at the beginning, is about God taking six more days (1,000-year days, 6,000 years) to restore two ruined creations — man and the material creation, with man *THEN* realizing the purpose for the earth's restoration and his creation in the beginning (*cf.* Rev. 5:1ff; 11:15).

And after six more days of redemptive/restorative work, after 6,000 years of redemptive/restorative work, God, *EXACTLY* like that seen in the last three verses in the Genesis foundation, is going to rest for one day, for 1,000 years. And redeemed/restored man, during *THIS* 1,000-year day (the Lord's Day), will rule a redeemed/restored earth (*cf.* Heb. 4:4-9; Rev.20:1ff).

THAT, succinctly stated, is the complete story of Scripture. Man's restoration, his salvation, *should ALWAYS be thought of in relation to the coming seventh day (introduced in Gen. 2:1-3), NOT in relation to the eternal ages beyond.*

The eternal ages simply *DO NOT* form part of this foundational framework set forth at the beginning.

If one desires to be Biblically correct regarding man's salvation — the complete panorama of salvation, beginning with the unsaved — *he can do so ONLY one way. He can do so ONLY through remaining with the unchangeable foundation.*

ANY other way is a non-Biblical way, out of line with the established foundation.

And that's what this book is about — calling attention to what Scripture has to say about the salvation message.

Dealing with the preceding after another fashion, note the numerous signs throughout the four gospels and Acts, along with the stated purpose for these signs.

There are thirty-five different signs throughout the gospels (many appear in more than one gospel), and there are at least thirty additional signs in Acts.

The signs in the gospels were performed during the offer of the kingdom to Israel, and the signs in Acts were performed during the re-offer of the kingdom.

(Note that these are only the recorded signs.

Only a fraction of all the signs that Jesus, along with His disciples, performed were recorded [*cf.* Matt. 4:17, 23, 24; 10:1-8].

And the same would be true concerning signs performed by the Apostles and others during the Acts period. Only a fraction have been recorded [*cf.* Acts 2:43; 6:8].)

Then, John 20:30, 31, dealing specifically with the signs in John's gospel, indirectly provides the purpose for *ALL* of the signs in *ALL* four gospels, which *could ONLY* be the same for the subsequent manifestation of signs in Acts:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Though this stated purpose has to do with the eight signs in John's gospel, three of these signs are also seen in the synoptic gospels as well, showing that *ALL* of the signs seen throughout *ALL* four gospels and Acts were performed *for EXACTLY the SAME purpose*.

The same sign simply *CANNOT* be dealt with after one fashion in the synoptics and another in John, and the signs in Acts would have to be understood in the same manner.

ALL of the signs MUST be dealt with the SAME way throughout, though they often are not.

And this is perfectly in line with the revealed purpose for signs when one begins in the Old Testament, at the foundational point, where the first mention of signs of this nature appear (where individuals were empowered to perform these supernatural works).

These signs in the Old Testament had to do with Israel in relation to the theocracy, the kingdom. They were supernatural powers designed to effect belief on the part of the Jewish people relative to the message being proclaimed (*ref.* the author's article, "Signs, Wonders, Miracles").

And, introduced and established after this manner in the Old Testament, *they could ONLY have had to do with EXACTLY the same thing throughout the gospels and Acts in the New Testament.*

Now, note something and note it well.

The proclaimed kingdom in the gospels and Acts, attended by signs, had *NOTHING* to do with either eternal salvation or the eternal ages, many notwithstanding.

Rather, this message had to do with salvation for a particular people (the Jewish people) in relation to the kingdom of the heavens (the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ).

The foundation set at the very beginning of Scripture, in Gen. 1:1-2:3, would limit proclamation concerning the kingdom of the heavens in the Gospels and Acts; and that to which the associated signs pointed would, accordingly, be limited in this same respect.

The signs were designed to effect belief on Israel's part relative to the message being proclaimed, and that to which they pointed was limited to time within the 7,000 years seen in the foundation in the opening thirty four verses of Genesis (seen also in the opening sixty-two verses in John's gospel).

With that in mind, note the first sign in John's gospel (2:1-11). This sign occurred on the seventh day (1:29, 35, 43; 2:1) and had to do with Israel during that coming seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, *NOT before, NOT after*.

And so it would have to be with any of the other signs.

ALL of the signs, in the four gospels and Acts, would have to be aligned with one another in this respect (a number of the signs show, after some fashion, this future time, this future seventh day; other signs, though not doing so, *could ONLY* have to do with this same future time as well).

Now, a question:

Since all the preceding is the way signs throughout the four gospels and Acts *MUST be viewed*, which can easily be shown from both the Old Testament Scriptures and their contextual use during the offer and re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, *HOW* can individuals take these signs and the stated purpose for these signs and do what is being done in Christian circles today?

Those misusing the signs *are often* associating them with a present salvation message for the unsaved in relation to the eternal ages rather than associating them with a past salvation message for the Jewish people in relation to the kingdom of the heavens and the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

(Some misusing the signs in the preceding manner reference the Messianic Era, though not apart from the eternal ages. They often see this era as the first of the eternal ages.

The Messianic Era though is *the LAST* of a septenary structure of 1,000-year periods [Man's Day, the first 6,000 years; the Lord's Day, the last 1,000 years], *NOT the FIRST era* of the eternal ages.

This type misuse of the Messianic Era, as the misuse of signs, would *NOT ONLY* be completely out of line with the septenary structure opening the O.T. [opening the N.T. in John as well] *BUT* with anything related throughout both Testaments.)

HOW can individuals read salvation by grace, with eternity in view, into something which has to do with deliverance offered to the Jewish people, with the 1,000-year Messianic Era in view?

Doing this and remaining within the way Scripture handles the matter would, of course, be impossible.

BUT, nonetheless, this is being done on every hand today, which takes one back to Matt. 13:33, showing how complete the leaven has done its damaging work.

The destruction of the Word of the Kingdom during the present dispensation — a message having to do with salvation/restoration for Christians, a future inheritance in the kingdom, to be realized during that seventh day — evidently has had far-reaching ramifications. This destruction of one Biblical doctrine has *negatively affected, after some fashion, ALL Biblical doctrine.*

Things in the preceding foreword, and more, are dealt with at length in this book.

A suggestion:

Before reading the seven chapters in this book, it may be helpful to read Appendix I, "Biblical Subject and Structure."

1

Salvation Message in the Gospels (I)

*Pertaining to Eternal Verities, OR to the Proffered Kingdom?
Status of the Israelites at This Time — Saved, OR Unsaved?*

(This opening chapter deals with the salvation message seen in the gospels, at the beginning of the New Testament.

And, to properly understand this message in the gospels, along with the status of the Jewish people to whom Christ came — *saved, OR unsaved?* — one *MUST* go back 1,500 years preceding the gospels and see how God, beginning with Moses and continuing with Joshua, originally set this matter forth — with Moses drawing from 2,500 years of human history [beginning in Gen. 1], setting the stage for that seen throughout the remainder of the Old Testament.

And, with the preceding in view, it should go without saying that the foundation established in these opening Old Testament books — a foundation upon which the remainder of the Old Testament *MUST* rest — *could ONLY carry over into and continue throughout the New Testament [the gospels, Acts, epistles, Revelation] WITHOUT CHANGE!*

The New Testament, of necessity, MUST rest on this SAME foundation, for there is NO OTHER!

[Attention in this chapter will be given to that foreshadowed by events on day one in Gen. 1, along with corresponding sections of Scripture extending from Gen. 3 to Ex. 12a (e.g., Gen. 4, 22, 37).

Reference will be made, but little attention given, to that foreshadowed by events on days two through seven in Gen. 1, 2a, or to that section of Scripture extending from Ex. 12b through Joshua.

These latter two parallel sections of Scripture (forming *the unchangeable foundation* [Gen. 1:6ff], followed

by commentary [Ex. 12b ff]) comprise that part of continuing Scripture dealt with in the gospel accounts].

The unchangeable foundation is set forth in Gen. 1, for a purpose revealed in the opening three verses of Gen. 2. And there is a continued building on the foundation in sections of Genesis, extending all the way to Joshua.

This is the way God has structured His Word — *foundations established at beginning points, with subsequent revelation continuing to build and add to the unchangeable foundations.*

Thus, if an individual wants to properly understand the subject of this chapter [salvation], or any other subject in Scripture, *he MUST begin where God began and study the subject AFTER the manner in which God originally structured His Word.*

There is NO ALTERNATE WAY!)

The Bible is a book of redemption; and basic, unchangeable teachings pertaining to redemption are set forth at the very beginning of Scripture.

In the opening verses of Genesis God sets forth the unchangeable manner in which He, in His infinite knowledge and wisdom, restores a ruined creation. There is *a restorative work* which follows *a specific pattern*, and the matter is accomplished entirely through *Divine intervention*.

And within this pattern set forth and established in a perfect, God-ordained fashion at the very beginning, *God reveals HOW any subsequent ruined creation would, of necessity, have to be restored.*

It would have to be restored in COMPLETE accord with the established pattern.

In this respect:

It would have to be restored AFTER a certain order.

And it would have to be restored ENTIRELY through Divine intervention.

Thus, to establish correct thinking relative to the fundamentals of salvation (restoration), as previously stated, one *MUST begin where God began*—*in the opening verses of Genesis.*

Ruined Man — Anticipated (Gen. 1, 2)

The manner in which God would restore ruined man, a subsequent ruined creation, was set forth at this opening point in Scripture, where God restored the ruined material creation; *and NO CHANGE CAN EVER OCCUR, for the matter was established PERFECT in the beginning.*

The first thing we read relative to the restoration of a ruined creation is: *The Spirit of God moved, God spoke, light came into existence, and God formed a division between the newly existing light and the remaining darkness (Gen. 1:2b-5):*

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And 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.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

And *the remaining darkness* would reveal that God *had NOT* finished with His restoration work at the end of day one (*cf. Rev. 21:22-25*). Five more days of work remained, completing six days, with a view to the seventh day.

Thus, in relation to fallen man (a subsequent ruined creation, in need of restoration), the Divine work seen on day one *can ONLY* foreshadow God’s initial work pertaining to man, having to do with his eternal salvation (*a beginning work to restore the ruined creation*).

And the Divine work seen beyond this, seen in days two through six, *can ONLY* foreshadow God’s continued dealings with saved man (*a continued work to restore the ruined creation*).

And the Divine work seen throughout all six days is with *a view to that foreshadowed by the seventh day, which Scripture later reveals is related to the salvation or loss of the soul, the life, of a man who has passed from death unto life.*

But, let's stay mainly with the work on day one.

Note something though in passing. Once God had finished with His work on the first day, *He DIDN'T go back and re-deal with anything from this day. Rather HE BEGAN to deal with that remaining, as it pertained to THE COMPLETE RESTORATION of the ruined creation seen in that foreshadowed by God's work during the subsequent five days.*

Thus, *EXACTLY* as in the type, *God DOES NOT go back and re-deal with saved man today relative to ANYTHING having occurred in his passing from death unto life. Rather, He NOW deals with man ON THE BASIS OF, NOT RELATIVE TO HIS NOW having life, with light shining out of darkness* (Gen. 1:3, 4; John 1:4, 5; 5:24; II Cor. 4:6), *with a view to the seventh day.*

Ruined Man — Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel (Gen. 3, 4)

Now, moving from this initial information in the opening two chapters to chapters three and four, we see several things pertaining to that initially occurring on day one in Gen. 1:2b-5.

Chapter three relates man's fall, resulting in a subsequent ruined creation.

And how does God restore a ruined creation?

The answer, of course, along with the purpose for restoration — all as previously dealt with — is seen back in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis.

Then, additional information relative to the matter at hand begins to be revealed in chapter three.

In this chapter, a man (Adam, typifying Christ 4,000 years later) partook of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil, bringing about the fall.

But, remaining in complete conformity to Christ's work at Calvary, *Adam, who had NOT been deceived (I Tim. 2:14), partook of the fruit from the tree willingly and for a purpose.*

In effect, once Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, *Adam was left WITHOUT a choice.* He found his bride in a fallen state (though the fall didn't actually occur in all its completeness until Adam, as the federal head, ate of the fruit himself).

BUT, the ONLY way Adam could effect Eve's redemption, with a view to BOTH one day partaking of the tree of life together and realizing the purpose for their very existence (Adam partaking of the tree as a COMPLETE being, which necessitated Eve's presence with him), was to partake of the forbidden fruit HIMSELF, which he did.

And this, as previously stated, was with a view to *redemption.*

Note how this is clearly seen in the antitype:

Christ, in complete conformity to the type, found His bride in a fallen state. And He Who knew no sin became sin (II Cor. 5:21).

And this was with a view to *redemption*, in order that *BOTH* Christ and His bride might one day partake of the tree of life together and realize the purpose for man's existence (*Christ partaking of the tree as a complete being, which will necessitate His bride — bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh (cf. Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:30) — being present with Him.*

Then a clear inference to death and shed blood is introduced later in the chapter through God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins (they had lost the covering of Glory at the time of the fall).

(Note again that man at this point is *NOT* placed completely back into the position which he had occupied before

the fall [*a restoration of the covering of Glory, which, in subsequent Scripture, is seen restored ONLY on the seventh day*].

There was a restoration of the Glory, after a fashion, during Moses' day at Mt. Sinai when the Glory filled the tabernacle [Ex. 40:1ff]. And this may be what is being referenced, or at least is in view, in Rom. 5:14 — "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses..."

But man being brought *completely back into the position from which he fell* will require a restoration of the Glory *after the SAME fashion* seen prior to Adam's fall. Such a restoration will necessitate man, *once again, being enswathed in Glory.*)

Then in chapter four, more information is added. Man, seen acting in the previous chapter, would be the one to die and shed his blood (*Cain slaying Abel, Israel slaying Christ*).

And putting all of this together from these four chapters, *the complete salvation picture is seen, a picture which NEVER changes.*

Eternal salvation is A DIVINE WORK, performed by a Man (Who has to be God), with DEATH and SHED BLOOD involved.

ALL fallen man can do is simply RECEIVE that which has been done on his behalf (through BELIEVING in the One Who died and shed His blood).

NOTHING MORE can enter into the matter.

And note again that once man has passed from death unto life, God's dealings with man then move to that which lies out ahead. God *NEVER AGAIN* deals with man relative to the salvation which he presently possesses.

In that respect, note *the absurdity* of saying that a saved man can lose his salvation. *HOW could he lose something which he had NOTHING to do with obtaining, particularly since God is NO LONGER dealing with him relative to the matter?*

(As previously seen in this chapter, it can be easily shown, beginning with Gen. 3, *that death and shed blood MUST be present for ANY aspect of salvation to exist or be efficacious.* And that, of course, would include *NOT ONLY the past aspect of salvation BUT the present aspect as well, with a VIEW to the future aspect.*

THEN, something invariably overlooked is the fact that this has to do with MORE than just fallen man; this, as well, has to do with the material creation, presently under a curse because of man's fall.

The preceding can easily be seen in Rev. 5, where Christ — *NOT* as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” [v. 5] *BUT* “a Lamb as it had been slain” [v. 6] — acts in *THIS* capacity, for the seven-sealed scroll which the Son took from His Father's right hand contained *the redemptive terms of the earth* [vv. 1, 7; cf. Rom. 8:19-22].

And God's Son, taking this scroll, subsequently breaks the seals [Rev. 6:1ff] *while exercising the office of the slain Lamb, NOT a Lion [though in view because of the judgmental nature of that about to occur].*

REDEMPTION is in view, which requires, NOT just a lamb, BUT a PARTICULAR Lamb [v. 2-6]. And, beyond that, THIS Lamb HAD to be slain. There HAD to be death and shed blood.

Death and shed blood are required for the future redemption of the earth. In this respect, APART from death and shed blood, the earth could NEVER be redeemed.

Thus, *APART* from Christ's finished work at Calvary, it is *NOT* just man that would find himself separated from redemption *BUT* the earth as well.

Then, if the preceding is true, and it is, *HOW* could God have previously performed a redemptive work in relation to the same earth when He, over six days time, restored the ruined earth in Gen. 1?

After all, Christ's finished work at Calvary lay 4,000 years in the future.

WHERE was the death and shed blood, by *ONE PARTICULAR*

LAMB, when God restored the earth 6,000 years prior to the time when He will do it again, as seen in Rev. 5 [cf. vv. 2-6]?

After all, *IF* God requires death and shed blood the second time, *would He NOT* have required it the first time as well?

THEN, beyond the preceding, note that the first restoration of the material creation foreshadows man's restoration, following the fall in Gen. 3. This is the original type, establishing a foundation *which NOT ONLY NEVER changes BUT a foundation upon which ALL subsequent material dealing with man's salvation MUST rest.*

And, since death and shed blood MUST be present when redemption is in view — whether man or the material creation, again, WHERE was the death and shed blood in the restoration account in Gen. 1.

Are we to think that death and shed blood were *ABSENT in Gen. 1* — relative to the earth's redemption, foreshadowing man's redemption — *NOT being seen until Gen. 3?*

HARDLY!

The necessity of death and shed blood being present in the earth's redemption *in BOTH* Gen. 1 and Rev. 5, along with Gen. 1 forming the original foundational type foreshadowing man's redemption [both past and present, with a view to the future], is *WHY* Christ is seen in Rev. 13:8 as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" [in a book dealing specifically with the earth's future redemption/restoration, reflecting back on a past redemption/restoration].

Apart from God working things out in this manner there could have been *NO* restoration of the earth in Gen. 1, there could have been *NO* complete original type of man's salvation [*complete with death and shed blood*], and there evidently could have been *NO* efficacy in animal sacrifices for the first 4,000 years of human history [reflecting back on *the Lamb slain prior to that time*].

THUS, Man's Day begins in Genesis with redemption, inseparably associated with death and shed blood, having to do with BOTH the material creation and man.

THEN, redemption in connection with death and shed blood is seen throughout Man's 6,000-year Day, redeeming man to ultimately rule this material creation.

AND, Man's Day is brought to a close in Revelation with redemption and shed blood, redeeming once again the material creation for man to rule.)

Ruined Man — Isaac, Joseph (Gen. 22, 37)

Now, a lot of time has been spent on this overall salvation issue from the first four chapters of Genesis for the simple reason that *these foundational truths pertaining to salvation are needed to understand the subject at hand* — salvation as seen later in Scripture, particularly as it is seen in the camp of Israel on both sides of Calvary, in the gospels and in Acts.

(Again, note the importance of beginning where God began and studying Scripture after the manner in which God structured His Word.

Understand how the subject is set forth in its foundational respect at the beginning of Scripture and you will know how to handle the same subject when it appears later in Scripture, though perhaps dealt with from different perspectives at times.

But fail to understand the subject in this foundational respect...)

Events in Genesis chapter twenty-two or chapter thirty-seven provide additional information and further illustrate that seen in the opening four chapters of Genesis.

But let's move on to Exodus chapter twelve.

Ruined Man — Exodus 12 through Joshua

All of the preceding is put together in the death of the firstborn in Ex. 12a (both *personal* and *national*), where the birth of a nation descending from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob occurred.

The firstborn *had to die*, yet the individual (and nation) *had*

to still live. There was NO ALTERNATE, and there was NO OTHER WAY that this could be accomplished aside from THE ONE WAY which God unchangeably established in the beginning.

The firstborn could EITHER die a substitutionary death (another paying the penalty on his behalf, with God recognizing death and shed blood in this respect) OR the firstborn could pay the penalty himself.

There was/is NO alternate to the preceding!

And this can be clearly seen the night of the Passover in Egypt in Ex. 12a. When the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight, He looked for *ONE THING and ONE THING ONLY. He looked for THE BLOOD of a slain lamb, properly applied to the door posts and lintel of each house.*

Seeing *THE BLOOD*, the Lord knew that *DEATH had already occurred in that house. The firstborn had DIED*, vicariously; a lamb from the flock had died in his stead, God recognized this vicarious death which He had previously established, God was satisfied, and He passed over that house.

However, if the Lord saw *NO* blood, then the firstborn in that house had to pay the penalty himself, for *the firstborn MUST DIE!* The firstborn then died apart from a substitute, for God has *rejected* the firstborn, and the wages of sin *is death* (Rom. 6:23).

Now, a self-answering question:

In relation to man's eternal salvation, did God recognize death and shed blood in ALL these sacrifices throughout man's 4,000-year history preceding the events of Calvary?

Certainly He did! After all, He is the One Who instituted and recognized these sacrifices, with man [God Himself in Gen. 3] only carrying out that which God had previously established.

And events continuing from Ex. 12b and ending by the Jewish people entering into and possessing the land, realizing the promised inheritance in Joshua, *parallel* events continuing from

day one in the foundational type in the opening thirty-four verses in Genesis, ending with God resting from all His work on the seventh day in the first three verses of chapter two.

But, since days two through six, into the seventh day, were not really dealt with to any extent earlier in this chapter, the matter, aside from reference in order to provide purpose for events on day one, will not be carried beyond Ex. 12a in this latter part of the chapter as well.

ALL of the sacrifices relating to events of Day one in Gen. 1 or Ex. 12a were inseparably associated with the One actually slain before man even fell, or before one sacrifice was ever even offered.

Christ was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), which takes matters back to the beginning of the restoration of the ruined earth, preceding man’s creation, in Gen. 1:2b.

In reality, ALL of the O.T. sacrifices foreshadowed an event which God looked upon as having already occurred (Eccl. 3:14, 15; Isa. 48:3ff).

(As well, the paschal lamb was given to Israel [Ex. 12:1ff], Christ was the paschal Lamb, and *ONLY Israel* could slay this Lamb.

Thus, this *ALSO* places the existence and act of Israel, seen in type in Gen. 4, at a time prior to the restoration of the earth.

Explain these things! Try believing them instead!)

Salvation at the Time of Christ’s First Coming

At the time Christ was here on earth 2,000 years ago, the Jewish people were still sacrificing *the Passover lamb*. In this respect, with *death and shed blood involved* — *the death of the firstborn involved* — the Jewish people at Christ’s first coming *could ONLY* have been just as saved as the Israelites during Moses’ day (*cf.* I Cor. 10:1-11) or any others who had availed themselves of God’s provision during succeeding years or during the preceding 2,500 years of human history.

Or, matters can be moved to anytime during the 2,000 years this side of Calvary and say that saved individuals throughout this time were/are no more or no less saved than individuals who were saved throughout the 4,000-year history of the human race preceding Calvary.

It matters not where you view salvation by grace — during Adam's day immediately following the fall, or today 6,000 years later — *it's THE SAME, by DEATH and SHED BLOOD.*

It CANNOT be otherwise, for matters have been UNCHANGEABLY established, in the beginning, in Moses.

Again, Jews in view at Christ's first coming would have been individuals who were having a part in the sacrifice of the paschal lambs year after year (*which could ONLY have been the nation at large, else Christ could NOT have come to this nation and dealt with them relative to spiritual values, offering to the Jewish nation the kingdom of the heavens*).

It is rather strange to see individuals begin the gospel accounts, particularly John's gospel, seeing Christ coming to an unsaved Jewish nation and, through the proclamation of a message concerning the kingdom, offer to these people eternal salvation.

That is about as far removed from reality as one can possibly get in any semblance of correct Biblical interpretation as one moves from the prophets into the gospels. But, nonetheless, a message of this nature, or some semblance of this type message, is *EXACTLY* what is *NOT ONLY* widely taught in Christian circles today *BUT* widely accepted as well.

The *ONLY* death and shed blood seen in the gospel accounts in this respect — prior to the events of Calvary near the close of each account — has to do with the Jewish sacrificial system, beginning with the slaying and application of the blood of the paschal lambs.

And God could ONLY have looked upon the death of paschal lambs, the application of the blood, and the death of the firstborn in the camp of Israel at this time EXACTLY as he had done during

Moses' day in Ex. 12a.

Yet, completely contrary to the way matters had been laid out in the Old Testament, then carried over into the New Testament, individuals see Christ and His disciples proclaiming a salvation message to individuals *whom God could ONLY reckon as having ALREADY experienced the death of the firstborn*—*individuals who were ALREADY saved being told how they could be saved, through believing on the Paschal Lamb WHO HAD YET to die and shed His blood.*

All of this (things presently being proclaimed), from a Scriptural standpoint, *makes LITTLE to NO sense.* But, nonetheless, *THAT'S* what is being believed and taught in much of today's Christendom.

Salvation on Both Sides of Calvary

Now, let's look at both sides of Calvary and the offer (gospels) and re-offer (Acts) of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel.

(But, note something about events in John chapter eight first.

In this chapter, Christ, during His earthly ministry, referred to Jews who had believed in Him [vv. 30-32] as being "of your father the devil" [v. 44].

Don't try to read *saved-unsaved issues* into this chapter. Christ, in v. 44, was dealing with *saved Jews being brought forth from below rather than from above, doing the work of Satan rather than the work of God.*

Individuals erroneously seeing *saved-unsaved issues* in this passage [not understanding how believers could be associated with Satan in the manner seen in v. 44] often attempt to understand the pronoun beginning v. 33 as a reference back to *unbelievers alone in the crowd [v. 22], rather than to the believers in vv. 30-32.*

However, aside from a complete misunderstanding of the subject matter in the passage [*the proffered kingdom, NOT eternal salvation*], verse 36, reflecting back on v. 32 would, alone, clearly show the fallacy of this type thinking.

The SAME thing was seen earlier in John's gospel — *disciples turning and walking no more with Christ* [6:59-66]. Or, note, again, *the SAME thing* with Peter in Matt. 16:16, 17, 22, 23 [*brought forth from above, then from below*].

Again, the issue in this chapter, as the central issue in the book as a whole, is *NOT eternal salvation*. Rather, the issue has to do with the message being proclaimed to Israel at that time, which pertained to *the kingdom*.

[Note the same thing relative to Christians in I John. Reference to a bringing forth from above rather than from below appears ten times in this book. Understand that this expression is used of Christians (those to whom the book has been written), *NOT* the unsaved, and *you will have FAR, FAR less trouble with I John*.

In fact, *correctly understanding how this expression is used in I John, as in John's gospel, will open the book to one's understanding*.)

Question: Jews rejecting Christ, responsible for the events of Calvary, were they saved or unsaved?

Then another question:

If saved — which they, of course, were — did that status change once the Paschal Lamb had died, with God then no longer recognizing animal sacrifices as before, nullifying their salvation?

How could a status in their salvation possibly change?

God had previously *ESTABLISHED* and *RECOGNIZED* animal sacrifices in this respect; and, according to the original type in the opening two chapters of Genesis, or any other type, once a man had passed from death unto life, God *NEVER* dealt with the person on that basis again.

ALL of God's dealings with the person, beyond availing himself of the blood sacrifice, were *NOW* focused on that which lay ahead, *NEVER* on that lying behind (*beginning with Adam, continuing through Abraham, Moses...*).

Had not the status of these Jews remained the same (*i.e.*, just as saved following Calvary as they had been before Calvary), *there could have been NO re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, as seen throughout the Book of Acts.*

And had God continued to recognize animal sacrifices beyond Calvary (beyond the rent veil), the re-offer of the kingdom could conceivably have continued indefinitely (as long as Israel remained in a position to and continued to sacrifice the paschal lambs year after year).

But, following Calvary, God recognized *ONLY* the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, *NOT* sacrifices of paschal lambs as before. And, on the basis of Rev. 13:8, *one could ONLY* say that God, in reality, had recognized *ONLY* the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb since before man fell, which was seen and foreshadowed in all the paschal lambs slain up to Calvary.

Thus, the re-offer of the kingdom could remain open as long as a saved generation of Jews remained on the scene (*NOT* Christians, *BUT* saved Jews [individuals continuing to reject the One Who had previously presented Himself to them *in a regal respect*]).

But once this generation had passed off the scene, there could be NO continued re-offer of the kingdom.

The preceding is why the re-offer, of necessity, ceased after some thirty years (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.).

The saved generation of Jews was rapidly passing off the scene, leaving unsaved Jews to replace them. *And that having spiritual values could NOT have been offered to individuals separated from spiritual values.*

And, aside from the preceding, a new entity had been brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.

(By way of summation, note the Jews saved throughout the four gospels, on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, or Jews saved throughout Acts, including Paul saved en route to Damascus.

ALL should be thought of in the sense of the conversion of individuals already saved, with a view to the proffered kingdom, i.e., saving the saved [like present aspects of salvation, with a view to the future kingdom, seen in the lives of Christians today].

The preceding is evident from that seen throughout the ministries of John, Jesus, the Twelve, the Seventy, and Peter's message and response to a question in Acts 2:14-39 on the day of Pentecost, setting the stage for that seen throughout the Book of Acts.

And, in this respect, moving beyond Acts 2, it would be absurd to think of Paul, a zealous Pharisee, not having previously availed himself of God's sacrificial provision — *i.e.*, not having previously observed the Passover [with Paul being counted among those saved in the same respect as all Jews, "from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40; 9:1ff)].

Then, note a few related, companion thoughts on the whole matter that has been discussed throughout this chapter.

It is commonly believed and taught in Christendom that the Old Testament saints were saved *through believing God* [e.g., Abraham in Gen. 15:6; cf. Rom. 4:3]. But, if so, since there was *NO death and shed blood, ONLY belief*, this would be *COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO the foundational types, set forth particularly in the opening four chapters of Genesis* [cf. Heb. 9:22].

[Regarding the preceding paragraph, refer to the author's article, "Abraham's Salvation — Time and Place"].

And, moving beyond the foundational types, this would, as well, be equally *CONTRARY TO ALL subsequent types [which MUST follow the foundational types] or anything else in Scripture dealing with the subject* [e.g., Israel's seven festivals in Lev. 23, beginning with the Passover, beginning with death and shed blood (cf. Ex. 12a)].

And the same thing can be seen at Christ's first coming. If Christ came to an unsaved Jewish nation and Jews could be saved by believing on Him [or the Samaritans in John 4], *WHERE was the death and shed blood? Christ had yet to die and shed His blood, allowing belief of this nature.*

It is true that Christ was “slain from the foundation of the world” [Rev. 13:8], *but God STILL required/requires death and shed blood, BOTH past and present [present, of course, through the past, finished work of Christ at Calvary].*

Thus, note the importance of understanding and ALWAYS remaining with the overall, UNCHANGEABLE, God-established foundations from Genesis.

One either goes right or goes wrong AT THIS POINT!)

This entire preceding chapter has dealt with the salvation issue throughout the Old Testament, taking matters particularly from Moses’ day (reflecting back on Adam’s day and beyond) to the time 1,500 years later when Christ was on earth the first time, along with the continued thirty-year Acts period.

In short, an individual *MUST* understand that which events in Gen. 1:2b-5 and Ex. 12a foreshadow *BEFORE* moving on into that which events in Gen. 1:6ff and Ex. 12b ff foreshadow.

And, correspondingly, an individual *MUST* understand how Israel fits into the whole of the matter, throughout the period from Moses to Christ, continuing from the gospels into the Acts period.

PROPERLY understanding this overall issue will allow one to properly understand and deal with the four gospels and Acts.

BUT, NOT understanding this overall issue...

2

Salvation Message in the Gospels (II)

The Message of John, Jesus, the Twelve, the Seventy

To the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel

The Kingdom of the Heavens Is at Hand

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Matt. 3:1-3).

“Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee...

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 4:12, 17).

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these...

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 10:1, 2a, 5-7).

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come...

And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Luke 10:1, 9).

The central message in the four gospels is plain and simple enough to understand and deal with, and the same is true concerning the epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, the general epistles, and the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3).

But the Book of Acts, forming somewhat of a bridge between the gospels and the epistles, is where matters can become complex, though that need not be the case.

And the approach that so many Christians seem to take — seeing the message of salvation by grace through faith, with eternal verities, as the central message throughout — certainly hasn’t helped matters.

In fact, this type approach to the New Testament, beginning with the gospels, usually centering on John’s gospel as the one gospel written to tell an unsaved person how to be saved, *has caused insurmountable problems in correct Biblical interpretation.*

Following this type approach will, for all practical purposes, close the door to any overall, correct interpretation throughout the New Testament, which reflects back upon and negatively impacts correctly understanding the Old Testament in the same manner.

One simply CAN’T approach Scripture from a wrong standpoint and, in the end, come out right. “Error” does NOT work that way. It NEVER has, and it NEVER will.

As well, it matters little what man may think about something — what is or is not important, what this or that means, etc. When it comes to Biblical interpretation, ex-

pressions such as, “I think...,” “I believe...,” should be stricken from one’s vocabulary.

That which a person thinks or believes, when it comes to Biblical interpretation, is OF NO MOMENT WHATSOEVER!

THE ONLY THING OF ANY MOMENT is what God has to say about the matter, expressing His thoughts and/or ways on the subject, recorded in His Word, which are invariably quite different than man’s thoughts and/or ways:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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” (Isa. 55:8, 9).

When a person seeks understanding concerning things in Scripture, *understanding MUST ALWAYS be derived from ONE SOURCE ALONE! And it MUST ALWAYS be derived ONE WAY ALONE!*

Scripture has been designed to explain itself. That is the way God, through His Spirit, structured His Word. *Scripture MUST be compared with Scripture to derive and understand God’s thoughts and/or ways, NEVER through any method involving man’s thoughts and/or ways.*

With the preceding in mind, what does Scripture itself have to say about the central subject seen throughout the New Testament, *which can ONLY have its base in and be an outworking of that previously seen in the Old Testament?*

And that can be shown by simply taking the God-Breathed Word — which contains things quite different than have been “seen,” “heard,” or “have entered into the heart of man” — and allowing the Spirit to reveal “the deep things of God” through “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (I Cor. 2:9-13).

The only alternate to the preceding is seen in the next verse (v. 14), *through "natural" means*. And this verse, kept within context, *could ONLY refer to a saved individual resorting to the natural rather than to the spiritual in Biblical interpretation*.

Salvation, a Revealed Goal

ONE CENTRAL MESSAGE, with its base in and carried over from the Old Testament, pervades the gospels. This message has to do with "salvation," which can be traced back to a beginning point in the opening verses of Genesis.

Salvation, deliverance, is the central message pervading ALL Scripture.

But, WHAT salvation is being dealt with? WHAT deliverance is in view? Salvation, deliverance, has more than one aspect in Scripture, *though the ultimate goal is always seen to be the SAME*.

1) The Basic, Overall Type

Note in this respect the basic, overall type beginning in Ex. 12.

The Israelites under Moses, through the death of paschal lambs, were delivered from the death of the firstborn while still in Egypt.

They were subsequently delivered at the Red Sea crossing through God opening the waters for them to cross and then closing the waters upon Pharaoh and his armed forces.

And they could have been delivered from the nations inhabiting the land at Kadesh-Barnea had they not disbelieved God and rebelled against His chosen leader, Moses.

In this same respect, when reading and dealing with things in the gospels, *WHY* do so many Christians fix their attention on a *singular subject with respect to salvation, deliverance?*

Invariably, individuals doing this see salvation by grace through faith as the central message throughout Scripture, attempting to align practically everything in the gospels with this message, which is the message seen in that dealt with in the death of the paschal lambs in the preceding overall type.

WHY do individuals do this, particularly since this is *NOT at all* the plainly revealed central subject matter seen throughout the gospels, much less all Scripture?

And it is also quite clear that John's gospel is *NO different* than the other three in this respect, dealing with the same subject matter. It is simply *NOT possible* to read and study through the gospels, seeing three of the gospels dealing with and centering around one subject and John's gospel dealing with and centering around another.

The central message throughout ALL four gospels is plainly seen to be THE SAME, though from different perspectives. ALL four can clearly be seen to deal with different facets of EXACTLY THE SAME central message, and salvation by grace through faith is NOT that message.

In fact, there is *NO such thing* as any book in Scripture — Old Testament or New Testament — dealing centrally with salvation by grace. Though this message can be seen throughout Scripture, beginning in the opening verses of Genesis, *salvation by grace is simply NOT the central subject matter at hand anywhere in Scripture. Rather, salvation by grace is ALWAYS seen as the beginning point of the central subject, the central message (e.g., Ex. 12ff; Eph. 2:8-10).*

Jude sought to write an epistle dealing with salvation by grace, *BUT the Spirit stopped him and moved Jude to write on another subject, on apostasy (vv. 3ff).*

And, as previously noted, *ANY* of the other epistles is the same, *AS* is Acts, *AS* are the four gospels, *AS* are all Old Testament books.

And the preceding is *NOT* to minimize the importance of the message surrounding salvation by grace through faith, *for this is where one MUST begin. But a person is NOT to remain there. He is TO GO ON. And that is EXACTLY what ALL Scripture does.*

2) Continuing with the Type

The Israelites under Moses *DIDN'T remain in Egypt, continuing to deal with death and shed blood in relation to the death of the firstborn.*

NO, they left Egypt under Moses, en route to a land set before them, to which they had been called.

NOR are Christians under Christ to continue dealing with death and shed blood in relation to the death of the firstborn.

NO, they are TO MOVE ON to things pertaining to a land set before them, to which they have been called.

And *THIS* is the way Scripture is structured.

Scripture BEGINS with death and shed blood in relation to the death of the firstborn. But Scripture DOESN'T stay there. Scripture MOVES ON toward a GOAL, which the beginning makes possible, a GOAL in another land to which the one having appropriated the blood of a dead paschal lamb in the type, the blood of the slain Paschal Lamb in the antitype, has been called.

The Kingdom Proclaimed Throughout

Salvation by grace through faith is *NOT* seen as the central message throughout any one of the four gospels, the epistles or any place elsewhere in Scripture, *for a revealed reason.*

And that is quite easy to show, if done the Biblical way — *simply allow Scripture to address the issue.*

Man, in the beginning, was created *for REGAL purposes* (Gen. 1:26-28), his fall had to do *with these purposes* (Gen.

3:1ff), and *God's purpose* for restoring fallen man — revealed at the beginning in Genesis and dealt with throughout the Old Testament — was *REGAL*. *This purpose was to ultimately undo all things surrounding the fall and place man back in the regal position seen at the time of his creation* (Gen. 3:15, 21; Rom. 11:29).

1) A Divine Work

To work out His plans and purposes, God, 2,000 years beyond man's creation and fall, called one man out of the human race — Abraham. And *ALL THINGS* involved in Abraham's call (Gen. 12:1-3), a separate and distinct creation formed in his grandson, Jacob (Isa. 43:1), and the bringing into existence of the nation of Israel from the loins of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob — a nation through which God would work out His plans and purposes — *had to do with God ultimately placing man back in the position for which he had been created in the beginning*.

Jesus, having been sent through the nation emanating from the loins of Abraham, was born "King" (Matt. 2:2). He appeared on this earth and presented Himself to the Jewish people in this respect (Matt. 4:12ff; 21:1-5; John 1:11; cf. Zech. 9:9), and salvation, deliverance for Israel in connection with His message, had to do with *His kingship and kingdom* (Matt. 21:6-9).

2) A Particular Message, for a Particular People

As seen throughout the gospels — begun by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1ff), continued by Jesus (Matt. 4:12ff), the Twelve (Matt. 10:1ff), and the Seventy (Luke 10:1ff) — *the message was directed to Israel pertaining to deliverance with respect to the kingdom*.

The message throughout was *for Israel ALONE*, and it had *NOTHING* to do with the message of salvation by grace through faith. Rather, it had to do with *an OFFER* of the

kingdom of the heavens (an expression used thirty-two times in Matthew's gospel), *BASED on national repentance* (e.g., as seen in Daniel's repentant prayer on behalf of himself and the nation in Dan. 9:3-19).

(The expression, "the kingdom of heaven" [KJV, et al.], should be translated, "the kingdom of the heavens" in all occurrences. Both nouns are *articular*, and "heaven" is always *plural* in the Greek text [*he basileia ton ouranon*].)

This expression is peculiar to Matthew's gospel, except possibly John 3:5. A number of Greek manuscripts have "the kingdom of the heavens" instead of "the kingdom of God" in this verse.

However, the matter of how John 3:5 should read in this respect is immaterial. All four gospels are about *the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, based on national repentance*. And the expression, "the kingdom of God," as it is used throughout all four gospels *would have to be understood in this same respect [limited to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom, seen in the subject matter at hand and articulated as such in Matthew's gospel]*.

Note for example in Matt. 19:23, 24, both expressions appear and are used *in a synonymous respect* [cf. Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9]. And this same usage of "the kingdom of God," as will become evident in later chapters in this book, carries over into the Book of Acts and the epistles.)

The offer of the kingdom to Israel, beginning with John, had to do *with the heavenly aspect of the kingdom* (the realm from whence Satan and his angels then ruled and continue to rule today), *NOT the earthly*, the kingdom covenanted to David, centered in Jerusalem on earth.

This heavenly aspect of the kingdom was introduced in Genesis in connection with Abraham and Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20) and is seen referenced and/or dealt with numerous times throughout both Testaments (cf. Gen. 22:15-18; 26:3, 4;

28:3, 4, 12-15; Dan. 7:18-27; Heb. 11:8-12). Thus, this facet of the kingdom was far from something new, proclaimed and offered to Israel on the basis of national repentance.

(Note that the kingdom [the earth] is first seen in the opening verses of Scripture, in the restoration of this kingdom, though the two aspects of the kingdom [heavenly, and earthly] are not dealt with until later in Scripture.)

2) *Beyond Salvation by Grace*

There is *NOTHING* in this central message pervading the gospels that is even remotely connected with salvation by grace.

From the type in Exodus, alluded to earlier, salvation by grace is seen in things having to do with the death of the paschal lambs while still in Egypt.

That being proclaimed throughout the gospel accounts *has to do with things beyond the death of the paschal lambs* (foreshadowing Christ's death at Calvary, as the Paschal Lamb), *with a deliverance relating to the land of their inheritance, though seen as heavenly, NOT earthly.*

And *THIS ALONE* would tell a person something about those in Israel to whom this message was being proclaimed and the offer extended. Those being dealt with throughout the gospels — dealt with relative to that which lay beyond the death of the paschal lambs — *could ONLY have been a saved people, NOT unsaved in need of applying the blood of the paschal lambs back in Egypt.*

And all of this should be easy enough for anyone to see and understand, for the Jewish people to whom Christ came were still sacrificing the paschal lambs year after year. And, on that basis, they *could ONLY* have been just as saved as the generation which left Egypt under Moses, with God seeing efficacy in death and shed blood both times, *along with ALL of the times between where death and shed blood were seen.*

Solely from a Biblical standpoint, *it would be IMPOSSIBLE to see efficacy during Moses' day but not see THE SAME THING 1,500 years later, with the same people and the same set of circumstances.*

As well, had Christ come to an unsaved nation 2,000 years ago, it would have been *EQUALLY IMPOSSIBLE* to see John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy dealing with a message concerning the land set before them — which is what they were doing, *a heavenly land* in this case — without first dealing with a message concerning the application of the blood of dead paschal lambs, or the shed blood of the Paschal Lamb about to die.

Had the nation been comprised of unsaved Jews at this time, and had John, Jesus, the Twelve, and later the Seventy not begun with a message concerning the death and shed blood of paschal lambs, they would have been ignoring that foreshadowed by things seen on day one in Gen. 1 and beginning with that foreshadowed by things seen in days two through six.

Scripture is simply NOT structured in such a manner, NOT at the beginning or any place beyond that.

And, if a person wants to see a basis for God recognizing efficacy in the shed blood of paschal lambs either during Moses' day or 1,500 years later when Christ was on earth the first time, note the statement in Rev. 13:8:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

(Also note something about that seen in the preceding several paragraphs in connection with the importance of Biblical typology, one of the many different ways that God has structured His Word [Heb. 1:1, 2].

The saved status of the nation when Christ came the first time *CAN EASILY BE SEEN FROM THE TYPES, as previously outlined.*

And, in that respect, a main reason why a high percentage of Christians make the mistake of trying to see a message of salvation by grace throughout the gospels, with the message directed to individuals comprising an unsaved nation, *can ONLY be the neglect of and often disdain for the types.*

And because of this, they, in reality, are neglecting/rejecting a large portion of the revealed Word.

And this part of the Word is something which, as previously seen, would open other parts of the Word to their understanding, preventing them from making mistakes of this nature in Biblical interpretation.

And this particular mistake is far from something minor in Biblical interpretation. *This is something MAJOR, VERY MAJOR.*

[As an added note to illustrate *the importance of types*, numerous Christians, attempting to show the importance of the study of prophecy, often say that twenty-five to thirty percent of the Old Testament is prophetic in nature.

But, saying this, they have ignored something about Scripture, for *the percentage is MUCH, MUCH higher. They have ignored God's built-in typical aspect of Scripture.*

Including the types would probably *more than double the percentage figures that many present (e.g., referencing the types, try to find something in the Pentateuch alone that, from a typical standpoint, was not prophetic 3,500 years ago or even remains prophetic today.*

Most of Genesis remains prophetic today, all of Exodus does...)].)

John's Gospel

And if anyone wants to see the Gospel of John as some-

how different than the other three gospels in the preceding respect, note *the eight signs* around which the gospel is built and what is *NOT ONLY* dealt with in the signs *BUT* that which signs have to do with.

That dealt with in these eight signs has to do *with Israel*, with these signs carrying matters out into *the future, into a future kingdom, showing the nation, at that time, what they could have IF they would but heed the proclaimed message and repent.*

And this gospel today shows what they one day will have when repentance is forthcoming.

Signs in Scripture, as illustrated in the preceding paragraph, have to do with two inseparable things — *Israel and the kingdom.* *And IF both are NOT present, signs, in the true Biblical sense, CANNOT EXIST.*

Signs have NOTHING to do with the Church or with the gospel of grace. Instead, as previously stated, they have to do with ISRAEL, and they have to do with THIS nation in relation to THE KINGDOM.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's article, "Signs, Wonders, Miracles.")

"Signs" are seen extensively dealt with throughout all four gospels and the Book of Acts.

They are seen throughout both the offer [in the gospels] and the re-offer [in Acts] of the kingdom to Israel. Beyond that, they ceased being manifested, as stated in I Cor. 13:8-10 [*ref. previously mentioned article*].

And the eight signs around which John's gospel is built *ALL* have to do with and point to *EXACTLY the same thing [Israel, the kingdom, and conditions during a seventh 1,000-year period when the kingdom will be realized]*.

And this is *EXACTLY* what is seen in *NOT ONLY* the other three gospels *BUT* the Book of Acts as well [*ref. the next two chapters in this book*].

Thus, attempts to single John's gospel out as being different than the other three in this respect, as being the one gospel written to relate the message of salvation by grace, can easily be shown to *NOT ONLY be false BUT very misleading as well [casting a completely wrong light upon the purpose for John's gospel] by simply allowing Scripture to speak for and interpret itself.*)

The Gospel of John, written sometime between about 40 to 60 AD (a window in time accepted by many who study these things), records eight signs performed by Christ during His earthly ministry (the eighth sign has to do with events surrounding Calvary and the empty tomb [cf. John 2:18-22]).

"Signs" were directed to Israel during the offer of the kingdom (by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy) and redirected to Israel during the re-offer of the kingdom (starting with the one hundred twenty in Acts 2 [v. 43], later through the signs in John's gospel [which show that this gospel had to be written before the close of the re-offer, before about 62 AD, *else the stated purpose for this gospel, incorporating these signs, could NOT be realized*]).

And *the stated purpose* for these signs being manifested in the offer (during time seen in the four gospels), with eight of these original signs singled out in John's gospel (written during the Acts period) is given toward the end of John's gospel:

"And many other signs [having to do with Israel in relation to the proffered kingdom] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written ['these have been recorded'], that ye [a plural pronoun, the entire Jewish nation] might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life ['life' in relation to that being offered, 'life' in *the Messianic kingdom*] through his name" (John 20:30, 31).

And attempts by well-meaning Christians to take these

two verses and associate them with the gospel of grace, showing a completely wrong purpose for John's gospel, has probably done more to pervert or destroy any correct understanding of the message seen throughout the gospels than possibly any other one thing.

(Also note that something similar to that done with John's gospel has been done with John's first epistle as well — erroneously seeing this epistle, as John's gospel, dealing centrally with eternal salvation.

Both books begin in a similar manner ["In the beginning..."; "That which was from the beginning..."], both are written to saved people [John's gospel, to the Jewish people during the re-offer of the kingdom; John's first epistle, to Christians], and both have similar, declared purpose statements toward the end of each book [John 20:31 (see quotation, bottom of previous page); I John 5:13]:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life [*lit.*, 'life for the age,' which is the central subject of the epistle, *NOT* eternal life], and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

The Gospel of John deals with signs and the Jews in relation to the proffered kingdom, and I John deals with Christians, apart from signs, in relation to the same proffered kingdom.

The Gospel of John deals with *being brought forth from above* [1:12, 13; 3:3-10] in relation to Jews and the proffered kingdom, and I John deals with the same overall subject in relation to Christians [2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18].

That is, *both books deal with saved people being brought forth from above rather than from below in relation to the proffered kingdom.*

For related information on the preceding, refer to the author's articles, "Misuse of John 20:30, 31," and "Repentance, Belief in John's Gospel."

Also, see the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*,

and Appendixes I,IV in this book, “Biblical Subject and Structure” and “Aion, Aionios.”)

Rejection of the Offer, Crucifixion of Israel's King

To further illustrate the nature of the message seen throughout the gospels, carrying matters into Acts, then into the epistles, note that which Israel's religious leaders brought to pass through their opposition to the Messenger and His message.

Israel's religious leaders — particularly the Pharisees, who, by their very numbers, governed and controlled the religious life of the people — *followed Christ about the country, seeking, at every opportunity, to cast reproach upon Him, His disciples, and their ministry to Israel.*

Through this means, the Pharisees, along with the Scribes (the teachers and keepers of the Law, the fundamental legalists in Israel), were the ones primarily responsible (the Sadducees to a lesser extent) for a national rejection of the Messenger and His message, leading to and ending with the events surrounding Calvary.

In days immediately preceding the Cross, because of what the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees had caused, Christ cursed a fig tree which He came across en route to Jerusalem:

“Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever [*lit.*, ‘henceforward with respect to the age’]. And presently the fig tree withered away” (Matt. 21:18, 19).

(On the preceding translation of “forever” as “with respect to the age” — Greek, *eis ton aiona* — again, refer to Appendix IV in this book, “Aion, Aionios.”)

“The fig tree” is used in Scripture to symbolize *Israel* (Hosea 9:10; Joel 1:6-12). And Christ used this particular fig tree to *NOT ONLY* make a statement concerning the nation’s barren condition *BUT* also where this condition was about to take the nation.

There was NO FRUIT on the tree, NOTHING but leaves. And because of this, because of what had happened over the course of the past three to three and one-half years — *Christ seeking fruit from the nation, but finding ONLY a barren tree* — cursed the fruitless fig tree, cursed fruitless Israel, saying, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward with respect to the age.”

The reference to fruitlessness had to do with THE KINGDOM which had been offered, and the time in view relative to fruitlessness would be THE COMING AGE, THE MESSIANIC ERA.

Fruit will appear on the tree during the coming age. This is quite clear from the Prophets. But, NO FRUIT will appear on the tree relative to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom. That, as well, is quite clear.

And exactly why this would be the case, aside from the nation having borne no fruit, is seen farther down in the chapter, following the parable of the Householder and His vineyard (vv. 33-39).

Note Christ’s question to the chief priests and Pharisees concerning this parable (v. 40), their response (v. 41), Christ’s response in return (vv. 42-44), and the chief priests and Pharisees’ thoughts expressed among themselves (v. 45):

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

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

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvel-

lous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matt. 21:40-45).

Note verse forty-three in the preceding.

Because of that which had been done, resulting in rejection on the fruitless nation's part, Christ announced in the presence of those primarily responsible (Israel's religious leaders) that "the kingdom of God" (that facet of the kingdom which had been offered to and rejected by Israel, the kingdom of the heavens, the heavenly sphere of the kingdom [*ref. indented text on page twenty-six of this chapter*]) would be *taken from Israel* and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

On the day of Pentecost, about two months later, this "nation," a completely new entity, was brought into existence — *the one new man* "in Christ" (*cf.* II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:11-16; I Peter 2:9-11).

And God used this new entity, the one brought into existence to be the recipient of and be allowed to bring forth fruit for this sphere of the kingdom, to re-offer this kingdom to Israel.

This began in Acts chapter two and is seen being continued for about the next three decades throughout the Book of Acts, ending with Paul being rejected by the Jewish religious leaders in Rome.

And for the third and final time, following two previous climactic rejections, Paul announced to these Jewish religious leaders in Rome that this message would now be carried to the Gentiles (Acts 28:16-31; *cf.* Acts 13:14-46; 18:1-6).

And that is where Acts ends and the epistles pick up, with *Israel completely set aside for the remainder of the dispensation and the Church ALONE seen as the ONE NOT ONLY NOW in possession of the heavenly aspect of the kingdom but the ONLY ONE NOW in a position to bring forth fruit for this part of the kingdom.*

(That seen in the preceding three paragraphs — moving beyond the gospels into the Book of Acts, then into the epistles — is dealt with in the next four chapters in this book.)

3

Salvation Message in Acts (I)

*Continuing from the Gospels
Re-Offer of the Kingdom to Israel*

Events during time covered by the Book of Acts (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.) center around *the inception of the Church and the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation of Israel.*

The newly formed Church — *the one new man* “in Christ” — was NOW *the repository of the kingdom* (Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10) and was the entity which God used during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (with other saved Jews later helping those comprising *the one new man* to reach the nation with the message).

The original offer was made during about a three and one-half-year period, covered by the four gospels.

And *the re-offer* was made during about thirty succeeding years, covered by the Book of Acts.

Properly understanding the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts is dependent on properly understanding the previous offer in the gospels. And properly understanding the previous offer in the gospels is dependent on properly understanding the place which the kingdom occupies throughout the Old Testament, beginning with Moses in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Individuals invariably go wrong in the gospels, leading into Acts, and in Acts, leading into the epistles, when they attempt to understand and interpret these parts of Scripture apart from preceding Scripture, apart from the Old Testament.

And this is the primary reason individuals erroneously attempt to teach salvation by grace from numerous New Testament passages which have *NOTHING* to do with this message (e.g., being brought forth from above in the account of Nicodemus in John 3 [ref. Appendix III in this book, “Jesus Conversation with Nicodemus”], parables in the gospels, signs in the gospels and Acts, Peter’s message to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2...).

Scripture *MUST ALWAYS* be understood and interpreted in the light of the *EXACT* wording of the text, within its contextual setting, *NEVER* through any type secondary means which either ignores or does away with the *EXACT* wording of the text and/or separates the text from its contextual setting.

Understanding the Proclaimed Message

The Old Testament is replete with information concerning *BOTH heavenly and earthly promises and blessings associated with two spheres of the kingdom, the present status of the kingdom, etc.* And any type misunderstanding about the proffered kingdom by the Jewish people throughout the gospels and Acts *could ONLY have been the result of failure on the part of their religious leaders, over time.*

(Throughout both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom, during the time covered by the gospels and Acts, the Pharisees, with the Pharisaical Scribes — the largest of the religious sects in Israel — because of their very numbers, held sway over the religious life of the people.

And this would account for *the WHY* of Jesus’ words in Matt. 23, at the end of three and one-half years, at the end of the offer of the kingdom to Israel, as seen in the gospel accounts.

Note in this chapter where these Jewish religious leaders’ opposition to and antagonism toward both the Messenger and His message *had taken NOT ONLY themselves BUT the nation as a whole:*

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men [‘in front of men,’ *i.e.*, in their presence, in the presence of the people]: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in...

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

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

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” [vv. 13, 34-39].)

And to fully understand the harshness of Christ’s condemnation of these religious leaders, matters *MUST* be taken back to times preceding the three and one-half-year ministry of Jesus and His disciples, to times extending back to at least Abraham’s day, covering 2,000 years of Jewish history.

Numerous saints in the Old Testament, looking beyond the earthly kingdom — in days both before the theocracy and during the theocracy — manifested an interest in things having to do with the heavenly kingdom. They took their eyes off the present, and looked out into the future, *believing that God would ultimately bring to pass that which He had promised.*

Note, in this respect, Abraham's walk *by faith* in Heb. 11:8-16.

Two things stand out above everything else:

- 1) The promise of *an earthly inheritance*.
- 2) The promise of *a better inheritance*, "that is, an *heavenly*."

It is clear from verses 10-16 that *NOT ONLY* did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob desire the heavenly inheritance above the earthly, *BUT* so did many other saints during Old Testament times (vv. 9, 32-40).

And it is also clear from passages such as Matt. 8:11 and Luke 13:28 that these saints in the Old Testament who passed through their pilgrim walk, *by faith*, looking beyond the earthly inheritance to the heavenly, *WILL one day realize this heavenly inheritance*.

WHERE did these individuals during Old Testament times learn these things?

Many of these individuals lived centuries before the Spirit of God moved Moses to begin recording things about a heavenly inheritance and promises (Abraham, five centuries preceding Moses' day).

Yet, they knew about these things and governed their lives accordingly.

Again, *WHERE* did these Old Testament saints preceding Moses' day learn these things?

There, of course, is *ONLY ONE* answer. *God could ONLY have made these things known to them*.

THEN, there are the Jewish people during the 1,500 years extending from Moses to Christ, a people in possession of Moses' writings, progressively coming into possession of more and more revelation over the next 1,000 years.

And for the next 500 to 400 years, though in the diaspora, *they were in possession of the complete Old Testament canon*.

And, as seen in the latter part of Heb. 11, many of these individuals looked out ahead to the same thing that many others during days preceding Moses had looked, beyond the earthly to heavenly promises and blessings.

Thus, during almost 1,500 years of time, God had made known to the Jewish nation, through Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, numerous things about the kingdom which the nation should have known when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, and subsequently Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

The message beginning with John, then Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy — apart from mainly some of the parables — was essentially delivered *apart from any explanation pertaining to the kingdom itself*.

The miraculous signs provided an inseparable and inherent connection between Israel and the proffered kingdom. And the signs, as the message itself, *were performed in an unexplained manner as well*.

The message was, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” And this message was accompanied by supernatural signs (e.g., Matt. 4:17, 23, 24; 8:1ff; 9:1ff; 10:1ff).

And when Peter began the re-offer of the kingdom to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, or the manner in which the re-offer of the kingdom continued throughout the Acts period — covering about thirty years — *EXACTLY* the same situation existed concerning this message.

(Peter, on the day of Pentecost, and others following, *DIDN'T* even have to mention the kingdom, *per se*. The Jewish religious leaders *ALREADY KNEW* what the message was about, which provides the central reason for the continued opposition and persecution.

And this had all been done, and was continuing to be done, by individuals who had known/knew Christ's true identity [Matt. 21:37, 38a], which was why they had crucified Him (vv. 38b, 39).

There was ONLY ONE message — whether in the four gospels or in Acts — which needed NO explanation.

For information on the “signs” seen throughout the gospels and Acts, refer to the author’s article, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles.”)

Then, in the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts, certain things about the kingdom formed a part of the message (e.g., calling attention to Joel’s prophecy in relation to that which was occurring [ch. 2], or calling attention to that future day when all will be restored [ch. 3]).

And in the re-offer of the kingdom, *particularly up to the time of Stephen’s death in chapter seven*, there is a heavy emphasis on the fact that Israel had previously *NOT ONLY* rejected the message *BUT* had crucified the Messenger. Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom and had crucified their King.

BUT, the absence of an accompanying clarification or an explanation concerning the proffered kingdom itself (the kingdom of the heavens), along with the accompanying signs, *continued in Acts as it had throughout the gospels — unchanged.*

And there is a simple explanation concerning *WHY the message needed NO clarification or explanation.*

As previously seen, numerous Old Testament saints possessed a knowledge of the kingdom proclaimed to Israel throughout the gospels and Acts, aspiring to one day have a part in heavenly promises and blessings, governing their lives accordingly.

By the same token, the Jewish people at the time of Christ’s first coming should have possessed the same knowledge about this kingdom. They should have immediately understood the subject being dealt with and exhibited the same attitude as numerous Jews preceding them had exhibited relative to these promises and blessings, going all the way back to Abraham.

NO explanation should have been needed, particularly for the Jewish people at Christ's first coming. *ALL of the data surrounding the subject of the message had already been given.*

The data had been given through some thirty or more different men during a period of about 1,000 years (abt. 1400-400 B.C.; from Genesis to Malachi). And the Jewish religious leaders possessed copies of that complete record, allowing them to study and make this revelation known to the people.

In short, WHY spend time explaining something that had already been explained, particularly since the complete explanation required volumes of data?

This would be similar to Christ's return and ensuing events in the Book of Revelation dealt with in a rather succinct manner.

WHY is this?

The whole of Scripture, covering 6,000 years of Man's Day, has been building toward this event, but it is dealt with in the final book of Scripture *in a succinct manner.*

Again, WHY?

The answer is *the SAME* as the reason for the lack of explanation about the kingdom in the camp of Israel 2,000 years ago.

ALL of the data pertaining to Christ's return, EXACTLY as ALL the data pertaining to the inseparably related kingdom, had ALREADY been given. It was given different places in the same volumes covering the kingdom, extending into the New Testament.

Thus, anything other than a succinct statement, *apart from explanation*, would be entirely unnecessary in the Book of Revelation.

And anything other than a succinct statement — "Repent Ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand" — apart from explanation, *could ONLY have been considered entirely*

unnecessary — leaving the Jewish people completely *WITHOUT* excuse *IF* the content of the proclaimed message was *NOT* already understood — when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, followed by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy.

And, when moving on into Acts and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, even a mention of the “kingdom” itself, as seen throughout the gospels, was deemed unnecessary (the first appearance of the word “kingdom” in Acts is in 8:12).

The Jewish religious leaders *well KNEW* what the message involved. They *had KNOWN* this during the original offer; they *had KNOWN* what they were rejecting and Who they were rejecting and crucifying.

And *this SAME mindset* is carried over into the re-offer of the kingdom in Acts.

BUT, despite their religious leaders’ continued opposition to what was occurring, thousands of Jews believed the message, particularly during about the first year or two of the re-offer (*e.g.*, Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7).

This though *was NOT* to continue. The thousands who had believed the message during this time, or those who believed during succeeding years, represented only a small fraction of the complete nation.

The re-offer of the kingdom was to end the same way that the previous offer had ended.

The re-offer was to end by the nation once again rejecting the offer (*e.g.*, note the climactic rejection by Israel’s religious leaders in Rome at the termination of the re-offer in Acts 28:17-29 [*cf.* Matt. 21:33-45]), *leaving the desolate house where it remains today and will continue to remain UNTIL that seen in the closing verse of Matthew chapter twenty-three comes to pass:*

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (vv. 38, 39).

(Note that *THIS*, of necessity, leaves *ALL* Jews in *ALL* subsequent generations occupying *EXACTLY* the same position as Jews at the time of Christ's first coming. The passage of generations means *NOTHING* in this respect [cf. Zech. 12:10, "whom they have pierced"].

Also note where *THIS* leaves *ALL* Christians today, where it leaves the present recipients of the message pertaining to the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

Individuals during O.T. days, even apart from Moses' writings, knew things that so many Christians today *DON'T* seem to have any understanding of at all, though *Christians today are NOT ONLY* in possession of *Moses' writings, BUT the Psalms, the Prophets and the N.T. as well, providing even MORE explanatory data.*)

"Repent Ye," "Repent, and Be Baptized"

The message proclaimed to Israel, beginning with John in the offer of the kingdom in the gospels, along with the results, was:

"Repent ye [a plural pronoun, the entire nation]: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:2, 5, 6).

THIS is the SAME message that was continued by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy, with the results — because of Israel's religious leaders — *increasingly moving more toward the Cross than toward the crown, the proffered kingdom* (Matt. 4:17ff; 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff).

THEN, the continuing message in the re-offer of the kingdom is seen beginning in Acts chapter two.

The message was the SAME as before, with similar attendant results:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you [the entire nation] in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (vv. 38, 41).

However, particularly during the first year or two of the re-offer of the kingdom, prior to the call for repentance and baptism, the message usually dealt heavily *on HOW the previous offer in the gospel accounts had ended.*

The Jewish people had previously rejected *NOT ONLY* the message *BUT* the Messenger as well.

And, rejecting the Messenger, they had cried out for His crucifixion, ascribing allegiance to a pagan Gentile king in the process.

They had rejected “the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15), *choosing in His place what could ONLY have been the opposite, a prince associated with death.*

Thus, in the re-offer of the kingdom, preceding the call for repentance and baptism, the Jewish people’s attention was usually directed toward that which the nation had done, along with the fact that God raised the One Whom Israel had crucified from the dead, placing Him at His right hand, *UNTIL...* (e.g., Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-21; 4:8-22; 5:29-33; 6:8-14; 7:51-54).

In this respect, the subsequent message in Acts, though dealt with in a different manner, was *THE SAME.*

The SAME kingdom was in view, *the SAME offer* was being continued, and *the SAME message* was being proclaimed — *national repentance, followed by baptism.*

There was absolutely NO difference, there COULDN’T have been.

1) Repentance

National repentance was required because of centuries of

covenantal disobedience, dating, in one respect, all the way back to the inception of the nation during Moses' day, over fourteen centuries earlier.

(Covenantal disobedience had to do with a failure to keep the terms of the covenant given through Moses at Sinai.

This covenant [a conditional covenant], dependent on the previous Abrahamic covenant [an unconditional covenant], had to do with *the rules and regulations governing the Jewish people within the theocracy*.

Note Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 with respect to God's promises and warnings concerning what He would do *IF* Israel kept the covenant on the one hand *OR* what He would instead do *IF* Israel failed to keep the covenant on the other hand [Lev. 26:1ff, 14ff; Deut. 28:1ff, 15ff].)

And, because of continued disobedience, not keeping the covenant — which God, in His longsuffering, allowed to continue for centuries — God eventually uprooted His people from their land (a land unconditionally given to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob in the previous Abrahamic covenant), and drove them out among the nations *to effect repentance through Gentile persecution* (the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, about 722 and 605 B.C. respectively).

But, though a remnant was back in the land when Christ came the first time, national repentance was far from forthcoming. And this is the “why” of the call for *repentance* both during the offer of the kingdom seen in the gospels and the re-offer seen in Acts.

(The Greek word for “repent” is *metanoia*, or the verb form, *metanoeo*. These are compound words — *meta* prefixed to *noia* and *noeo*.)

The primary meaning of *meta* is “with.” But prefixed to *noia* [meaning “mind,” equivalent to “nous” (transliterated

from the Greek word *nous*), or *noeo* [meaning “to think”], *meta* [in *metanoia*] — doing something “with” the mind — takes on the thought of “changing” one’s mind.

Thus, *metanoia* and *metanoeo* mean, “to change one’s mind, one’s thinking.” Other things [turning from sin, etc.] *are subsequent to and emanate from repentance*, or things such as “godly sorrow” *can effect repentance* [II Cor. 7:10; cf. Jonah 3:9, 10; Matt. 12:41].)

1) *Baptism*

To understand how *baptism*, preceded by *repentance*, fits into the matter, note the typology involved at the beginning of the account of Jesus’ response to Nicodemus in John 3:1ff.

The subject at hand in Christ’s dealings with Nicodemus had to do with *signs in relation to the message being proclaimed, which was the proffered kingdom, NOT eternal life* (though eternal life [dealt with in relation to the kingdom first and foremost] is dealt with later in the discourse.

Christ’s two opening statements to Nicodemus *could ONLY* have drawn from a large section of Israeli history, extending from the Red Sea passage in Exodus chapter fourteen to the entrance of the Israelites into the land in the Book of Joshua.

This is something which Nicodemus would have been quite familiar with, though he wasn’t able to properly relate Christ’s statements to this part of Israeli history.

And this would account for Christ’s sharp rebuke later in the conversation, when this became quite apparent:

“Art thou a master in Israel [*lit.*, ‘the teacher of Israel’ (not just any teacher, but *a particular teacher*)], and knowest not these things?” (v. 10b).

In this respect, note Jesus’ statement back in verse five, explaining that which He had opened with in verse three.

And an understanding of this will explain why the mes-

sage of the kingdom to Israel was accompanied by baptism, or why Christians are to be baptized today.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit [Gk., ‘Except a man be born (brought forth) out of water and Spirit’], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

(The construction of the Greek text of John 3:5 requires that both “water” and “Spirit” be understood *the SAME way* — either both in a literal sense or both in a figurative sense.

“Water” *CANNOT* be understood one way and “Spirit” another [this mistake is often made, erroneously translating, “water, even spirit”].)

Then, the type, beginning in Exodus chapter fourteen, opens John 3:3, 5 to one’s understanding.

a) *Out of Water*

There is really *NO way that Nicodemus could have associated Christ’s statements in John 3:3, 5 with the events back in Exodus chapter twelve* — the Passover (which would have related Christ’s statement to that foreshadowed by events on day one in Gen. 1 [vv. 2b-5]).

The Passover, the first of seven Jewish festivals given to the Israelites under Moses (*cf.* Lev. 23:1ff), had to do with events which Nicodemus would have known that the nation had kept, which Israel had been observing year after year, over centuries of time. And, being among Israel’s religious leaders, he *could ONLY* have been among those participating in these events.

The conversation between Christ and Nicodemus in John 3:1ff *could ONLY have been* a conversation between Christ and a person *who had ALREADY experienced the death of the firstborn, as seen in Ex. 12:1ff.*

And, beyond this, according to the things clearly seen and stated in both the text and context, the subject matter had to do with *the Jewish people and the kingdom (a people who could ONLY be viewed as already saved, having availed themselves of the blood of slain paschal lambs, with the firstborn having died vicariously).*

The opening part of this conversation *could NOT possibly have had anything to do with eternal salvation, which, of necessity, would have related to the events of Exodus chapter twelve.*

That to which Jesus referred *could ONLY be seen* in the type as having to do with events beyond the Passover in Ex. 12:1ff. It *could ONLY have been* understood as having to do with *a continued Divine work* beyond that foreshadowed by the events of day one in Genesis chapter one. It *could ONLY have been* understood as having to do with that seen throughout days two through six — *a continued bringing forth from above, with a goal in view.*

In the original type in Gen. 1:1-2:3, *this GOAL is seen as a seventh day rest.*

In the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, *this GOAL is seen as realizing an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

And both types point to different facets of *EXACTLY the SAME thing occurring during EXACTLY the SAME time* — events during the 1,000-year Messianic Era, which will be the seventh millennium following six millenniums of Divine restorative work.

Born out of water from John 3:5, in the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, *can ONLY* have to do with the symbolism seen in the Red Sea passage following the Passover (note corresponding events on day three in Gen. 1 [vv. 9-13]).

The Israelites (who had experienced the death of the firstborn) were then taken down into the Sea, symbolizing

burial following death (taken down into the place of death) and raised up out of the Sea, symbolizing *resurrection* (raised up out of the place of death) and placed on the eastern banks of the Sea, removed from Egypt (Ex. 12-15).

They stood on the eastern banks of the Sea through *supernatural means, wherein resurrection power was exhibited*. And they stood in this position with a view to *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

The Israelites, passing through the Sea, had gone down into *the place of death*. *ONLY the dead are to be buried, and the death of the firstborn had just occurred*.

Thus, *a burial MUST also occur*. *BUT* beyond burial, with a vicarious death of the firstborn, *there MUST also be a resurrection*.

The Israelites, following the death of the firstborn, possessed spiritual life.

Thus, they *had to be raised* from the place of death to walk “in newness of life” — something having to do with *the spiritual man ALONE*, for this resurrection *has NOTHING* to do with the man of flesh. He is to be left in the place of death.

This is pictured during the present dispensation through the act of baptism. A person (a Christian) having experienced the death of the firstborn vicariously (through the blood of the Paschal Lamb Who died in his stead) is placed down in the waters. He then, within the symbolism involved, *finds himself in the place of death, beneath the waters*.

But, because the One providing the vicarious death conquered death, the Christian *can be removed from the waters and find himself in the position of having been raised with Christ* (Col. 2:12; 3:1ff).

And in this position — wrought through *supernatural, resurrection power* — the Christian is *to walk* “in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), with a view to *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

It is going down into the place of death because of the death of the firstborn, and it is rising from this place, as Christ was raised, because the person possesses spiritual life. And this rising has to do with *the spiritual man ALONE*, for, again, *this resurrection has NOTHING to do with the man of flesh. He is to be left in the place of death.*

b) *Out of Spirit*

In John 3:5, Christ *NOT ONLY* referred to a *birth (a bringing forth) out of water* in the preceding respect, *BUT* He also referred to a *birth (a bringing forth) out of Spirit* as well.

Note the order: “Out of Water,” *THEN*, “Out of Spirit,” which would be *completely out of line with ANY thought that eternal salvation is the subject in these opening verses of John 3.*

(In eternal salvation, a work of the Spirit *MUST* precede an individual’s passage through the waters, *MUST* precede his passage through the place of death, *NOT* follow, as in John 3:5. The Spirit *MUST FIRST* move [Gen. 1:2b], performing a regenerating work in the individual, a passage “from death unto life” [John 5:24].

Or, another way of stating the matter, in eternal salvation, the death of the firstborn *MUST* precede that foreshadowed by the Red Sea passage [Ex. 12-14].)

In the type, this bringing forth out of Spirit is seen through the Israelites, on the eastern banks of the Sea — beyond their passage through the waters of the sea, typifying baptism — being led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, as they moved toward *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

And the antitype is evident. A Christian, *raised from the waters* to walk “in newness of life,” has the indwelling Spirit to lead him into all truth, as he moves toward *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

There MUST be a resurrection in view. Then, the one raised from the place of death MUST follow the man of spirit, allowing the Spirit to fill and lead him throughout his pilgrim journey (cf. Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16).

And the entire matter rests upon that initially seen and set forth in an unchangeable fashion in Gen. 1:2b-25 — the ruined creation removed from its watery grave and completely restored over six days time by means of a work of the Spirit throughout.

There MUST be an initial bringing forth from above (a passing “from death unto life” [Gen. 1:2b-5; cf. John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5]); THEN, there MUST be a continued bringing forth from above (Gen. 1:6-25).

And John 3:3-5 deals *with the TWO aspects of the latter* (out of water and Spirit), *NOT with the ONE aspect of the former* (the death of the firstborn back in Egypt), which is *EXACTLY* what is seen in the message to Israel throughout the gospels and Acts.

Concluding Thoughts:

Any way that the matter of John 3:3-5 is viewed, *SOLELY* from a Scriptural standpoint, *ONLY saved individuals can possibly be in view, many notwithstanding.*

The passage takes one back 1,500 years, from John’s day to Moses’ day. And, referencing Moses’ day, the passage has to do with events *following* the death of the firstborn in Ex. 12, *NOT* to events beginning with the death of the firstborn.

And, whether Jews at the time of and for a number of years following Christ’s first coming (with the proffered kingdom in view) or *the one new man* “in Christ” since that time (with the *SAME* proffered kingdom in view), *ONLY saved individuals can possibly be in view.*

It was saved Jews being offered the kingdom throughout time covered by the gospels and Acts, and it was/is Chris-

tians being offered the kingdom throughout time covered by the latter part of Acts and the epistles, extending into the present day and time.

4

Salvation Message in Acts (II)

Continuing from the Gospels

To the Jew First, Also to the Gentile

The original offer of the kingdom to Israel in the gospel accounts is a relatively simple matter to understand, though few seem to do so. Many individuals seem to want to see the central message proclaimed throughout the gospels, particularly John's gospel, as a message pertaining to salvation by grace.

And *IF a person does this*, they can forget about everything when they come to Acts and begin reading about the re-offer of the kingdom, *for they have NOT understood the base, the original offer.*

THEN, beyond Acts, any correct understanding of the epistles will be skewed as well, attempting to understand them within the same erroneous framework as previously seen in the gospels and in Acts, *for the SAME subject matter is continued in the epistles.*

IF an individual comes out of the gospels in a correct manner, understanding what has happened in the gospels, Acts is not really that difficult, for it is simply a continuation of that previously seen in the gospels. Acts, in one sense of the word, forms a fifth gospel.

BUT, IF an individual comes out of the gospels in a wrong manner, *NOT understanding what has happened in the gospels, it will NOT be possible to have any type proper understanding of Acts, or the epistles beyond.* Both Acts (continuing from the gospels) and the epistles (continuing from Acts) *can ONLY be dealt with after the same erroneous manner that the gospels had been dealt with.*

THIS is *WHY*, for example, that Peter's message to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:14-40 is often treated as a gospel message, directed to unsaved Jews, with individuals trying to fit and explain what is stated in the message, particularly in verse thirty-eight, into this erroneous type thinking.

Continuing from the Gospels

Note the continuation of the subject matter from the gospels in Acts chapter one. Christ, following His resurrection, *spent forty days with the disciples teaching them things pertaining to "the kingdom of God"* (v. 3), the subject previously seen throughout the gospels.

Then, immediately prior to His ascension, Christ commanded His disciples to "not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father." They, through this promise being realized, were to "receive power" after the Spirit had come upon them (vv. 4, 8).

And this could *ONLY* have had to do with *His previous COMMISSION to the disciples* (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark. 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8), *which was to be carried out in its fulness by a REPENTANT and RESTORED JEWISH NATION, with the stage being set through events on the day of Pentecost in chapter two, allowing this, over time, to subsequently occur.*

The Day of Pentecost

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:1-11).

The true nature of the events which occurred on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the first two chapters of the Book of Acts — when the re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel began — *is generally NOT understood in Christendom today at all*. And because of this, among other things, whole denominations have been built on a misunderstanding of these chapters.

Then, this misunderstanding has resulted in related problems.

That which occurred in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost (vv. 1-13), followed by Peter's explanation of matters (vv. 14-36), is seen coming to a climax in verses 37, 38. And cult groups, not understanding the things revealed in this chapter at all, have isolated and singled out Acts 2:38 as revealing the way in which a person is to be saved.

Then, numerous individuals, to counter the teaching of the cults on this verse, though not understanding the context either, have taught things concerning Acts 2:38 which are equally erroneous.

And, if either the Christian groups or the cult groups *rightly understood that which is stated in the verses leading into Acts 2:38*, the whole matter wouldn't even exist. Neither would act so completely out of line with Scripture.

In this respect, the matter really doesn't revolve around what Acts 2:38 states per se. Rather, the matter revolves around what is stated in the verses leading into Acts 2:38.

Understand the contextual verses FIRST; THEN, the text can be properly understood. But, attempt to isolate a verse such as Acts 2:38 from its context, and an individual finds himself in EXACTLY the same place that so many find themselves today — committing mayhem with Scripture and involved in non-Scriptural, sometimes cultic, teachings.

Correct Scriptural interpretation and understanding is really that simple. Note the EXACT wording of the text, READ and UNDERSTAND the context, and COMPARE Scripture with Scripture (I Cor. 2:9-13).

On the day of Pentecost, 33 A.D., one hundred twenty believers were waiting in a house in Jerusalem for the Spirit which Jesus had, ten days prior to that time, promised. They were “all with one accord in one place,” *waiting* (Acts 1:15; 2:1).

(Note the significance of the number *one hundred twenty* [10X12], particularly contextually. “Ten” is the number of *numerical completeness*, and “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*.

Christ has just spent “forty” post-resurrection days instructing His disciples in things pertaining to “the kingdom

of God" [Acts 1:3]. Now, ten days later [again, completeness shown in both the numbers "forty" and "ten"], something very significant in relation to the kingdom previously proclaimed was about to occur [events on the day of Pentecost].)

THEN, "when the day of Pentecost was *fully come*," just as the Lord had previously promised (though not having specified the particular day), the one hundred twenty were all "immersed in the Holy Spirit" (literal rendering of the promise in Acts 1:5 [cf. Matt. 3:11, *lit.*, immersion "in water," "in Holy Spirit," "in fire"]):

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

As seen, the promise concerning the Spirit being sent in Acts 1:5 had to do with an *immersion in the Spirit*; and that promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:2 (the house *filled*, those inside *immersed*). Then these disciples were also correspondingly *filled with the Spirit* (v. 4). And the latter can be seen occurring at subsequent times in other parts of the Book of Acts as well (*e.g.*, 10:45; 11:15, 16; *cf.* 9:17, 18; 13:9).

A two-fold experience of the nature seen in Acts 2:2-4 though *has NO PARALLEL in Christendom today*.

When an individual is saved by grace through faith today, the norm is *ALWAYS the same*. "Immersion" in the Spirit *ALWAYS occurs at the point of salvation* (I Cor. 12:13), and "a filling" with the Spirit is *ALWAYS a subsequent experience, progressively occurring over time (having to do with maturity in*

the faith, wrought through an assimilation of the Word [cf. Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16, 17]).

(Note that *neither immersion in the Spirit*, occurring at the time of one's salvation, *nor the subsequent filling with the Spirit* can have anything to do with one's salvation experience *per se*. *IF* either had to do with one's salvation, then salvation *could ONLY* be seen occurring different ways in different dispensations, for, throughout the three dispensations during Man's Day — Gentile, Jewish, Christian — immersion in the Spirit is something peculiar to the present [Christian] dispensation.

The means which God uses to restore ruined man *were SET in the opening chapters of Genesis and CAN NEVER change*. Thus, to see either *the immersion in the Spirit* or *a filling with the Spirit* having to do with one's presently possessed salvation today *is an impossibility*.

The immersion in the Spirit has to do with *the new creation "in Christ,"* [cf. II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26-29], which, again, *has NOTHING to do with one's presently possessed salvation;* and the filling with the Spirit, having to do with dwelling in the Word — an eating of His flesh and a drinking of His blood [cf. John 6:53-56; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16, 17] — *has to do with something subsequent to the immersion in the Spirit, with the continuing process of salvation, the salvation of the soul.*

And, though one's eternal salvation always remains in view, *the central subject in the whole of the matter, as seen in Scripture, is ALWAYS upon the continuing part of salvation, which has to do with the coming kingdom of Christ, with realizing or not realizing an inheritance in this kingdom.*)

Thus, the immersion in the Spirit and the filling with the Spirit *NEVER occur at the same time today*, as in the first two chapters of Acts and several other parts of the book. And there *is a clearly revealed reason why these differences exist in Scripture.*

In short, one experience (a filling with the Spirit, as seen

in Acts chapter two) is seen *ONLY DURING the time when the kingdom was being offered/re-offered to Israel*; and the other (an immersion in the Spirit) is seen *DURING the re-offer as well, but this experience CONTINUES FOLLOWING this time*.

The emphasis in Acts chapter two is on *Israel and the kingdom, NOT on the Church*. Though the Church was brought into existence on this day *as the entity NOW in possession of the kingdom of the heavens* and the entity through which God would begin extending a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, events throughout Acts chapter two *are essentially Jewish, NOT Christian*.

Acts chapter two records the beginning of a re-offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, an offer connected with Joel's prophecy (vv. 16-21), and an offer attended by signs, wonders, and miracles (vv. 6-13, 43). And *the immersion in and the filling with the Spirit* which were brought to pass on this day had to do with two things:

- 1) *The beginning of the Church (an immersion in the Spirit).*
- 2) *A beginning fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (a filling with the Spirit).*

A filling with the Spirit *in connection with Joel's prophecy* — something experienced by individuals on the day of Pentecost and at subsequent times during the period when the kingdom was being re-offered to Israel (from 33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.) — *CANNOT be the norm for any type Christian experience today, for Joel's prophecy is NOT presently being fulfilled. The fulfillment of this prophecy has been set aside UNTIL such a time as God once again resumes His dealings with Israel.*

Two Explanatory Greek Words

Though *Christians experience an immersion in and a fill-*

ing with the Spirit throughout the present dispensation, there are marked differences when these experiences are viewed in the light of a beginning fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Acts chapter two. The latter is something which the Spirit of God deals with in the New Testament through the use of two different Greek words for "fill."

1) *Pimplemi*

The word in the Greek text for *fill* in Acts 2:4 is not the same as the word for *fill* in Eph. 5:18 (for Christians today). The word used in Acts 2:4 is *pimplemi* (*pletho* [a different rendering of the same word] in some lexicons or concordances), and the word used in Eph. 5:18 is *pleroo*. Both words mean "to fill"; but there is a contextual difference in how the words are used, *seen in the purpose in view*.

Pimplemi in Acts 2:4 is used in a manner which refers to individuals being filled with the Spirit in view of *an end to* or *a conclusion of* something being attained. This is the word, for example, which is used referring to Elizabeth being brought to full-term in her pregnancy, prior to the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:57). And, in conjunction with this thought, it is also the word used of John the Baptist being "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).

John was the forerunner of the Messiah. He was the one who *initially* appeared to Israel with the message, "Repent ye [a plural pronoun, *the entire nation*], for the kingdom of the heavens *is at hand*" (Matt. 3:2).

And note the terminal point — *the kingdom WAS AT HAND*. And John was *filled with the Spirit, from his mother's womb, to proclaim this fact as he went forth preparing the way for the Messiah*.

This word is used *five times* in the Book of Acts referring to individuals being filled with the Spirit.

The first occurrence has to do with events on the day of Pentecost (2:4); *the second* has to do with Peter addressing the Sanhedrin (4:8); *the third* has to do with individuals collectively (as on the day of Pentecost [4:31]); and *the fourth and fifth* have to do with Paul, following his conversion on the Damascus road (9:17; 13:9).

In the first three occurrences, where a filling with the Spirit is referred to by the word *pimplemi*, a message to the Jews is in view; and that message is accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles (2:43; 4:14-16). That is, a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel is in view, accompanied by miraculous signs.

And the re-offer of the kingdom is continued *in the fourth and fifth occurrences* of the word, following Paul being introduced in the book.

When Israel had reached a climactic point in the nation's rejection of the kingdom in Acts 7:54ff (similar to the climactic point which the nation reached in the original offer [Matt. 12:22ff]), Paul appears in the book for the first time (Acts 7:58), the Samaritans from Acts 1:8 appear in the book for the first time (Acts 8:5), and Paul was subsequently set apart as the apostle who would carry the message concerning the proffered kingdom to the Gentiles (Acts 9:1-15).

Note the order for the proclamation of this message as originally given to the disciples in Acts 1:8:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Paul was the one called to carry this message to the latter group (Rom. 11:13; Gal. 2:7). And the word *pimplemi* is used of Paul being filled with the Spirit for power, to carry this message, simply because the offer of the kingdom was still open to Israel (with the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy

still being in view); and the offer would remain open for over two more decades.

The fact that the offer was still open to Israel was the reason Paul *ALWAYS* went “to the Jew first” before turning to the Gentiles, though he was the apostle called to go to the Gentiles.

The order in Rom. 1:16, in accord with Acts 1:8, was “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [Gentile]” (*cf.* Rom. 2:9, 10); and Paul didn’t, he couldn’t, violate this order (note that the Book of Romans was written very near the end, though within the approximate thirty-year period in which the kingdom of the heavens was re-offered to Israel).

2) *Pleroo*

The word *Pleroo* though, used for being filled with the Spirit in Eph. 5:18, is used in a different manner. Both *pleroo* and *pimplemi* mean “to fill”; and both words can be used referring to an end or to the fulfillment of something, such as “time,” etc. (*e.g.*, Acts 7:23, 30).

But the use of *pleroo* in Eph. 5:18 is not connected with Joel’s prophecy. The Holy Spirit previously used *pimplemi* for that purpose, at a time when the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy was in view.

(Note that the Holy Spirit was very careful in His use of words in Acts 2:2-4.

The word used for “fill” in verse two is *pleroo* [same as in Eph. 5:18], referring to the house where the one hundred twenty disciples were waiting *being filled* by “a rushing mighty wind”; but the Spirit of God changed words when He wanted to reveal that those inside that house had been “filled” with the Spirit in verse four, *having to do with Joel’s prophecy*.

Here He used *pimplemi*, and He continued to use *pimplemi* for this purpose [or a cognate, *peres* (6:3, 5, 8; 7:55; 11:24)] in other parts of the Book of Acts.)

Joel's prophecy either being fulfilled or not being fulfilled is *the key*. The Spirit used *pimplemi* to describe His filling work *IN CONNECTION WITH the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy*; and the Spirit later used *pleroo* to describe His filling work *APART FROM the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy*.

This is *the distinguishing difference* which marks the way that the two words are used in Scripture.

(The preceding presents the basics of how two different Greek words for "fill" are used in the New Testament — something which will allow a person to better grasp the true nature of that which began on the day of Pentecost and continued for about thirty years.

And possessing at least some understanding of this period is vital to a correct understanding of the central subject matter in both the Book of Acts [which presents a history of this period] and the epistles which follow [which were written both during the latter part of and immediately following this period].)

The Scene in Jerusalem, 33 A.D.

On the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. there were Jews gathered in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, states that it was not uncommon to have as many as 2,000,000 Jews in Jerusalem on this day.

The day of Pentecost was one of three annual feast days (Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) which adult Jewish males were required to keep *in Jerusalem* (Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:1-16), and some had to travel great distances to get to Jerusalem in order to keep these feasts.

Consequently, it was only natural that many Jews who came for the feast of Passover would remain in Jerusalem until the feast of Pentecost, slightly over fifty days later.

Thus, the Spirit was sent on a particular day — the day of Pentecost, effecting a beginning fulfillment of this festival — when numerous Jews from “every nation under heaven” were in Jerusalem; and those filled (*pimplemi*) with the Spirit (the one hundred twenty) were empowered to proclaim a message concerning the kingdom to these Jews, in all the various languages of their native countries. And these Jews, having heard the message, were, in turn, evidently expected to carry this message back to other Jews in the countries from which they had come.

This was the beginning of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, a ministry which would last for about thirty years (until about 62 A.D.).

Then, as previously stated, all of this was inseparably connected with a beginning fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (vv. 15-21). And immediately afterward, Peter delivered a message to Israel, which, after different fashions, became quite common in the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (vv. 22-36; *cf.* 3:12-26; 4:5-12; 5:12-16, 29-32; 6:8-7:53).

And that which the religious leaders and all the others in Israel were accordingly confronted with is also something which became quite common in this re-offer of the kingdom (vv. 37-41; *cf.* 4:1-4, 13-22; 5:17-28, 33-42; 7:54-60).

The religious leaders in Acts 2, confronted with what they had done, asked:

“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (v. 37).

And Peter told them *EXACTLY* what they must do:

“Repent [*i.e.*, ‘Change your minds’], and be baptized every one of you [national repentance and baptism]...”
(v. 38; *cf.* Matt. 3:1ff).

Only through this means could the wrong be corrected (the Jewish people, having previously rejected the message

and crucified the Messenger, *now* being called upon *to change their minds* [vv. 22, 23, 36-38a]); only through this means could the Jewish people receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v. 38b; cf. vv. 4, 16-21; Acts 10:45; 11:15, 16), which had to do with Joel’s prophecy and a filling with the Spirit in connection with the Greek word *pimplemi*.

And only after the Jewish people had done this would Messiah return and dwell in Israel’s midst, resulting in a continued and complete fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy — the entire Jewish nation filled with the Spirit, speaking other languages in a bold manner, enabling them to go forth to the Gentile nations of the earth with God’s message (Joel 2:27-32; Acts 3:19-21; 7:51-56; cf. Jonah 3:1ff).

(Note two things about Acts 2:38, one positive, the other negative:

- a. *That dealt with in the verse.*
- b. *That not dealt with in the verse.*

Acts 2:38 has to do *SOLELY* with a message to Israel pertaining to *THE KINGDOM*. Accordingly, this verse has *NOTHING* to do with *unsaved man today* — Jew or Gentile — in relation to *eternal life*.

Acts 2:38 has perhaps been misused and abused about as much as any other verse in Scripture.

Cult groups reference this verse, attempting to show how an unsaved person is to be saved. And even conservative groups, in an attempt to show what is wrong with cultic teachings concerning this verse, invariably approach the verse from the wrong standpoint — thinking only of salvation by grace [same as the cults, with those from conservative groups being just as wrong as those from the cult groups in this respect].

It is amazing to see the numerous articles and sermons that have been written or delivered over the years trying to explain, usually through reference to the Greek text, *certain*

things from this verse that are NOT even dealt with in the verse [i.e., trying to explain, from a verse that DOESN'T deal with salvation by grace, the relationship of repentance and baptism to salvation by grace].

Acts 16:31 would address the latter issue, answering the question in verse thirty ["Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"] and being perfectly in line with all of the Old Testament types bearing on the subject.

Attempting to see Acts 2:38 as having to do with the unsaved and eternal verities — then or today — is *completely out of line with:*

- a. That which this verse states.*
- b. The question asked in the preceding verse.*
- c. The context leading into this question and the response.*
- d. All Old Testament typology dealing with the subject.)*

Re-Offer of the Kingdom, Pentecost, the Commission

The ministry of the apostles (and others), seen beginning anew as the kingdom began to be re-offered to Israel on the day of Pentecost, *would have had to be IN COMPLETE KEEPING with Christ's previous commission to them*, seen at the end of the three synoptic gospels and the beginning of the Book of Acts.

The message COULD NOT possibly have been separated from this previous commission. One COULD ONLY have been part and parcel with the other.

Christ's commission to His apostles during His forty-day post-resurrection ministry appears to have been given in four different parts at different times, *with all four parts together forming the whole of the commission as it COULD ONLY be seen and understood.*

(This would be similar to the statement Pilate placed above Christ's head at the time of His crucifixion — "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." All four of the

gospel writers record a part of this statement, but not the complete statement. The complete statement *is seen only through comparing all four.*

Four parts of a complete commission, forming the whole of that commission, would also be completely in line with the way Scripture is structured throughout. No one part of Scripture provides the complete picture. But, comparing Scripture with Scripture, as Scripture is added to Scripture, *the picture ALWAYS progressively comes more and more into focus.*)

Thus, the different recorded accounts in which Christ commissioned His apostles during the forty days following His resurrection — given at the end of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and at the beginning of Acts — *CAN ONLY be viewed as different parts or forms of one commission, with ALL FOUR having to do with EXACTLY the same thing.*

These different accounts of what *CAN ONLY be seen as ONE commission MUST ALL be seen as a message “beginning at Jerusalem,” with the message to the Jews in Jerusalem (also elsewhere to both Jews and Gentiles, but proclaimed by Jews and attended by signs, wonders, and miracles [cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8]).*

And, as becomes quite evident, the carrying out of this commission began to occur ten days following Christ’s ascension — on the feast of Pentecost. As well, that which occurred on this day, inseparably associated with the carrying out of this commission, was the beginning of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, along with bringing the Church into existence (forming those who would begin carrying out this commission during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel).

The beginning of and initial carrying out of this commission on the day of Pentecost had to do with one

hundred twenty disciples *filled with and empowered by the Spirit, speaking other languages, beginning at Jerusalem, with everything completely in line with that which Christ had previously laid down when He gave the commission* (cf. Acts 1:8; 2:2-43; 3:1-4:13).

The fact that the message was to be carried to Israel *first*, attended by supernatural signs (Acts 2:4-43; 3:1ff), reveals one truth. And the fact that the message was subsequently to be carried to the Gentile world, also attended by supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8), reveals another.

(In the previous four gospel accounts, during the offer of the kingdom to Israel, there are at least thirty-five separate *signs*, along with a number of general statements regarding signs [often referred to as “miracles,” *i.e.*, *miraculous events* forming “signs”]. Several of the same signs appear in all four gospels, a number appear in all three synoptic gospels, and a few appear in only one gospel, particularly in John’s gospel.

In the Book of Acts, during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, there are at least thirty separate signs, along with a number of general statements regarding signs.

But these are only the recorded signs. Note the statement in John 20:30: “And many other signs...” [many unrecorded (John 21:25)]. And continuing “signs” in Acts *could ONLY be looked upon in the SAME manner.*)

Israel, hearing the message *first*, beginning on the day of Pentecost, *was expected to repent, bringing to pass the return of the King and the restoration of the kingdom.*

And, following Christ’s return and the restoration of the kingdom, *Israel was to carry this message to the Gentile world. The nation was to fulfill its calling as Jehovah’s witness to the ends of the earth* (Isa. 43:1-10), *carrying the message concerning the King and the kingdom to the Gentiles worldwide.*

Viewing Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 together, one can

easily see and understand this complete, overall truth. And these are two verses which have suffered about as much at the hands of Christians in general as they have from the cult groups.

Cult groups have removed these verses from their contexts to form a basis for their false salvation doctrines and practices. And numerous Christians, attempting to counter the cults — but, as the cults, seeing only basic issues surrounding one's eternal salvation in these verses — have, as well, removed them from their contexts (though interpreting them quite differently, but *ALWAYS non-contextually*).

Thus, with respect to correct, basic interpretation, both groups — usually attempting to align all Scripture, regardless of the text and context, with basic issues regarding the salvation message — *have MISSED the mark COMPLETELY. Both have ignored and, accordingly, have not dealt with THE SUBJECT AT HAND.*

Note how these two verses read:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

The verse in Acts has to do solely *with Israel and the kingdom* (vv. 36, 37, 43). The fulfillment of this verse does not extend beyond Jerusalem and Judaea in the Lord's commission.

But the verse in Mark has to do *with the Gentile nations and the kingdom* (v. 15), *with Jews proclaiming the message*. The fulfillment of this verse extends beyond Jerusalem and Judaea, into Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

But Jews MUST be the ones present as the proclaimers of this message, for “signs” would accompany the message (v. 17).

(Note something about *the message to the Gentiles in Mark 16:15-18*. “Signs, wonders and miracles” cannot exist apart from two things being present — *ISRAEL, and THE KINGDOM*. This is the way matters were set forth at the beginning in the O.T., forming a first-mention principle, *necessitating that matters remain this way throughout the remainder of Scripture*.

[For information on the preceding, refer to the author’s article, “Signs, Wonders, Miracles”].

Thus, first and foremost, the message seen in Mark 16:15-18 *CAN ONLY have to do with Israel and the kingdom*. *Accordingly, it CAN ONLY have to do with saved Jews proclaiming the message to saved Gentiles, with the message having to do with the kingdom, NOT salvation by grace through faith*.

This, as well, is perfectly in line with the commission as seen in Matt. 28:18-20. There is *NOTHING in this part of the commission about salvation by grace*. Rather, *matters begin with baptism and progress to discipleship and keeping the Lord’s commandments*.

And, the other two forms of the commission [Luke’s, in both his gospel and the Book of Acts] *MUST be understood in this same respect*.

Attempts to associate any of the four forms of this commission with the Church and evangelism, as has invariably been done over the years, is *completely out of line with any type sound Scriptural interpretation, closing the door to any correct understanding of the complete, overall message as presented in Scripture*.)

Israel though, preceding the carrying of this message to the Gentiles, had to repent and be baptized *first* (national repentance and baptism [Acts 2:38]) — same message as seen in the original offer of the kingdom in the four gospel accounts. And this would result in the nation receiving “the gift of the Holy Spirit” — as previously seen (vv. 4-38), *the Spirit being poured out on all flesh (i.e., those forming the Jewish*

nation being filled with and empowered by the Spirit, being able to deliver the message in all of the different Gentile languages worldwide [cf. Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:15-21]).

Then Israel, as Jehovah's witness (Isa. 43:1-10), would be in a position to go forth to Samaria and to the Gentile nations throughout the earth, *boldly carrying the message to these nations in their own languages*, bringing about the fulfillment of the Lord's commission in Mark 16:15 (cf. Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

And *supernatural signs* would follow the proclamation of the message *to ALL seen throughout the commission* — whether to Jews, to Samaritans, or to Gentiles throughout these different nations.

Had Israel followed Peter's instructions on the day of Pentecost (in response to the question which had been asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" [Acts 2:37] — "Repent, and be baptized..." [v. 38]) — Christ would have returned and restored the kingdom to Israel (see indented section, bottom of page).

And the nation — following the reception of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (a continued and complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy) — would subsequently have gone forth to the Gentiles with the message concerning the King and the kingdom, fulfilling Mark 16:15ff, along with that seen in the other three forms of the commission.

Christ's return and the "restitution ['restoration'] of all things" (which would have included the restoration of the kingdom to Israel) was contingent on *Israel's repentance* (Acts 3:19-21; cf. Acts 7:51-56). And the ministry of the disciples throughout the Book of Acts was a ministry toward this end.

That toward which ALL THINGS had been moving for the past 4,000 years was in the offering.

A repentant and restored Jewish nation would dwell in both heavenly and earthly lands, the theocracy in its fulness would be realized, and the Gentile nations of the earth would be reached through the Jewish people going forth as God's witness to these nations, fulfilling their calling.

And these disciples, realizing the importance of Israel's repentance in the preceding respect, carried the message to the nation after *such a zealous fashion and with such fervor* that they were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, and even killed by the Jewish religious leaders (Acts 3:1ff; 4:1ff; 5:1ff; 7:1ff).

And Paul, *comprehending the importance of this matter*, near the close of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, went so far as to say:

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh [if such could bring about Israel's repentance and that which would follow]” (Rom. 9:3).

(Note that the previous statement had to do with *Paul's position in the kingdom, NOT with his eternal salvation. The former COULD be forfeited, BUT NOT the latter.*

Israel's repentance was of such import that Paul, knowing and understanding the gravity of that involved, *was willing to go to the extent of relinquishing HIS OWN POSITION in Christ's coming kingdom IF the nation's repentance COULD be effected through such actions on his part.*)

But Israel didn't repent — not on the day of Pentecost nor on any subsequent day throughout the approximately thirty years in which the re-offer of the kingdom remained open.

Thus, since Israel didn't repent, Mark 16:15ff *NOT ONLY remained unfulfilled BUT, in actuality, CAN'T be fulfilled today.*

The Message Today

As previously seen, the gospel to be proclaimed in the Lord's commission in Mark 16:15ff, or in any of the other forms of the commission, was *the gospel of the kingdom*; and the message was to be attended by *signs, wonders, and miracles*.

And all of this is *COMPLETELY ALIEN* to the message which is to be proclaimed by the Church today, to either Israel or to the Gentile nations.

The message which the Church is to carry today *begins with the simple gospel of grace, progressing to the gospel of glory*. Israel has been set aside, and the kingdom is no longer "at hand."

And with Israel set aside and the kingdom no longer at hand, *signs, wonders, and miracles can NO longer form a part of any message being proclaimed*.

Thus, a message today, in line with that which is stated in Mark 16:15-18, would be *COMPLETELY out of place*.

A message of this nature, under the direction and power of the Spirit of God, *CANNOT possibly exist during the present time*. Such, from a Biblical standpoint, would be *IMPOSSIBLE*.

And the reason for *the impossibleness of the matter* is very simple: The Spirit of God empowering individuals to manifest supernatural signs today would be acting contrary to the very Word which He had previously moved men to pen.

But, note what can presently be found in Christendom.

Entire denominations have been founded on seeking after signs, wonders, and miracles, as seen in parts of Christ's commission to His disciples, along with related parts of the gospels and Acts (also I Corinthians, written during the time covering Acts).

And the present Charismatic Movement, which has crossed all denominational lines, has been founded upon and proclaims the same erroneous view relative to these supernatural signs.

This whole thing has taken its toll in Christendom over the years. And Christians today, seeing all of this, *are confused to say the least*. They generally have little to no understanding of the place which signs, wonders, and miracles occupy in Scripture; and Christians, on a scale larger than at any other time in history, *are, accordingly, being misled on every hand* (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).

And note the serious nature of the matter. We're dealing with *the very crux* of a central teaching in Acts, which will allow one to properly understand this book, a book leading into the epistles.

Go wrong here, and you will remain wrong the rest of the way. But, go right here...

(Reflecting back on the data in this and the preceding chapter of this book, the Acts period is vastly misunderstood. *BEFORE this time* [in the gospels], the message pertaining to the kingdom was *to the Jew ALONE* [Matt. 10:5-8]. *AFTER this time*, this message was *to the one new man "in Christ" ALONE* [Eph. 3:1-6; Heb. 2:3, 4; I Peter 2:9, 10].

BUT, during the Acts period, the message was *to BOTH, with the Jew holding priority* [Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10, 16].

Jews being saved during this time [e.g., the 3,000 and 5,000 in Acts 2, 4], contrary to common belief, *DID NOT* become part of the previously newly formed Church. Rather, they became part of those Jews saved during the original offer of the kingdom, during the previous ministries of John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy in the gospels.

And the salvation of these Jews [whether in the gospels or in Acts] had to do with a deliverance from an unbelieving, perverse nation, with the kingdom in view [Acts 2:40, 43], *NOT* with eternal salvation.

Then there is the use of terms during the Acts period, which would be out of place following this period [e.g., the word, "Church," is used numerous times referring *to saved Jews, NOT to the one new man "in Christ," as in Acts 7:38* (e.g.,

Acts 2:47, if authentic; the better manuscripts omit the word for "Church," *ekklesia*, in this text; 5:11; 8:1, 3; 9:31; I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13).

Also during this time, "Gentile" is often used of *saved Gentiles to distinguish them from saved Jews* (e.g., Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10)].

Note in the preceding respect, that *Paul, before his conversion, was the great persecutor of "the Church."*

However, *this CAN'T be referring to the Church made up of the one new man "in Christ,"* as seen following the Acts period, or today, for the *ONLY* ones forming the Church in this respect, up to Acts 10, when the first Gentile was saved, were the one hundred twenty forming the Church in Acts 2. *Paul persecuted believing Jews, a believing part of the Jewish nation, believing that they formed a heretical sect.)*

The Book of Acts, covering some thirty years, is a one-of-a-kind time. There was *NOTHING* like it before or after.

A number of things occurred during Acts which were peculiar to this period. And attempting to harmonize or fit these things into events during the time preceding (time covered by the gospels) or following (time covered by the epistles, leading into today) *can ONLY result in mayhem in Biblical interpretation.*

On the other hand, in conjunction with these peculiarities, there is a natural flow of subject matter from the gospels into Acts and, in turn, from Acts into the epistles.

Remain with the central subject matter, which begins with Moses, and you *WON'T* go wrong. *BUT*, depart from this central subject matter, and ...

5

Salvation Message in the Epistles (I)

Continuing from Acts

The Kingdom Completely taken from Israel

The events depicted in Acts 28:17-29 — Paul proclaiming the message to and being rejected by the Jewish religious leaders in Rome — *bring to a close the complete offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel* (offered in the gospels, re-offered in Acts, together covering over three decades).

Beyond this point, relative to the heavenly facet of the kingdom, attention turns *to the one new man “in Christ” ALONE.*

With Israel’s climactic rejection of the proffered kingdom, the message was *NO longer* “to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

And, in a respect, *the message following the Acts period was NEITHER to the Jew NOR to the Gentile.*

A statement distinguishing between saved Jews and saved Gentiles — using this type terminology, particularly in relation to the kingdom — *would have been completely out of place following this time.*

(The use of the words “Jew” and “Gentile” together, as they appear in Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10 [referring to both saved Jews and saved Gentiles], was something reserved for the thirty-year period when the kingdom was re-offered to Israel. Saved Gentiles were referred to in this manner, during this time, to distinguish them from saved Jews.

After the Acts period, such a use of terms would have been out of place, for a distinction of this nature, used in this manner, *NO longer existed.*

After the Acts period, saved Jews and saved Gentiles, together, became part of *the one new man* "in Christ," where a distinction between Jew and Gentile *did NOT* exist [II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26-29].

And the use of "Jew" and "Gentile" beyond this period would refer to individuals *outside the scope of the one new man, to unsaved individuals*. And it was to those comprising *this new man ALONE that heavenly promises and blessings were NOW being extended*.

Note though that the preceding *would NOT have immediately become the status quo among ALL Jews at the time that the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel ended*. At least a segment of the saved generation of Jews to whom both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom had previously been made still remained.

ONLY AFTER this complete generation had passed off the scene could *ALL* Jews be dealt with in the same manner in relation to *salvation and the one new man*, a manner which would be *EXACTLY the same for Gentiles* [both Jew and Gentile unsaved] and would exist in this manner for the remainder of the dispensation.)

During about the last two and one-half decades of the Acts period, Paul's missionary journeys had resulted in the establishment of numerous Churches throughout the Gentile world. And a number of the epistles, addressed to some of these Churches, were written during this time.

During the Acts period, these Churches would have been comprised entirely of Gentiles, though believing Jews (a believing part of the nation) and believing Gentiles (part of *the one new man*), in many instances, undoubtedly met together during this time, with very little being understood by either about any differences between the two.

And something of this nature would probably have continued for a time after the Acts period.

But with Paul continuing to proclaim that which had been revealed to him some twenty-five years earlier — the mystery — matters *could ONLY* have progressively changed over time.

Offer of the Kingdom Following the Acts Period

Following the Acts period, the entity that had been the repository of the kingdom since being brought into existence in Acts chapter two — thirty years earlier — *was NOW the LONE recipient of the message.*

The offer of the kingdom (in the gospels), then the re-offer (in Acts), had been made to Israel, with “rejection” seen time after time in the actions of the nation’s religious leaders *throughout this complete period.* And, as a consequence, in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, following the climactic rejection by the Jewish religious leaders in Rome, *Israel had been completely set aside.*

Israel, as a nation, was now *FOREVER* estranged from heavenly promises and blessings (cf. Matt. 12:31, 32; 21:33-43). *EVERYTHING for Israel was NOW earthly ALONE (the kingdom covenanted to David).*

To recap:

In the gospels, the message had been *to the Jew ALONE* (Matt. 10:1-8; 15:22-28).

In Acts, the message had been “to the Jew first,” *BUT*, unlike in the gospels, it had been “also to the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10).

THEN, the matter of the message being “to the Jew first” ended thirty years later when Paul, for the third and last time (insofar as the record relates), announced to the rejecting Jewish religious leaders in Rome that the message *would NOW* be taken to the Gentiles, who would hear the message (Acts 28:17-29).

Then, beyond Acts, the new creation “in Christ” is left as *the LONE entity to whom the kingdom was being offered*, which is the central message seen throughout the twenty-eight epistles, *though this message is almost completely unknown and NOT dealt with by Christians today.*

And the latter itself is rather amazing. The whole of Christendom has a book which, from one end to the other, *deals with a KINGDOM*. But practically the whole of Christendom *DOESN'T* seem to know this. They *DON'T* seem to know what they have in their hands, what they are reading.

They deal with practically everything but what they should be dealing with, an existing situation foretold by Christ before the Church was even brought into existence (note the first four parables in Matt. 13, within context).

And, with that in mind, the remainder of this chapter will be taken up with data from different epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, General, and Rev. 2, 3), showing a uniform content relative to the proffered kingdom.

The Twenty-Eight Epistles

Moving through the epistles, Romans will be dealt with first, showing an introductory, established subject matter in the first chapter. Then, moving beyond the opening chapter, this introductory subject matter will be developed.

And Hebrews will follow Romans, for both are often thought of as companion epistles and, consequently, studied together.

BOTH epistles begin with a lengthy dissertation (the first chapter in each) relating what each epistle is about. And, as will be shown, the two epistles are about *the SAME thing*, though dealt with in different manners.

Then, as will subsequently be shown following Hebrews, this type structure is not something peculiar to these two

epistles. *The SAME thing* can be seen in a number of the other epistles, with *ALL of the epistles dealing with different facets of the SAME thing*.

Thus, following comments on Romans and Hebrews, in line with the preceding, *the SAME thing* will be shown from a select number of the other epistles.

1) Romans

Romans chapter one has to do with *TWO types of saved individuals* in relation to the *gospel* (good news) mentioned different places (in vv. 1-16), and to *faith* (vv. 16, 17), associated with this good news.

The division of the chapter into two parts, with respect to *these two types of individuals*, is seen at the end of verse seventeen, with verse eighteen beginning the second part of the chapter.

BEFORE this division there is a reiteration of the subject matter and the description of one type individual (vv. 16, 17 *cf.* vv. 1-17).

AFTER this division, with a view to the subject matter already laid out in the opening part of the chapter, there is a description of the other type individual (vv. 18-32).

a) *The Type of Saved Individuals Presented in vv. 1-17*

The individuals described in the opening part of the chapter are, as Paul described himself, “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”; or, using an explanation of that being referenced in the words “gospel” and “Christ” in the verse, it could be said that individuals of this nature are “not ashamed of the good news of the One Who will rule and reign.”

There is really *NOTHING* about salvation by grace through faith in these first seventeen verses.

These verses, among related issues, have to do with “the seed of David” (v. 3), declared to be “the Son of God with power [‘sonship’ has to do with *rulership*]” (v. 4), with

“obedience to the faith” (v. 5), with the faith of Christians in Rome being “spoken of throughout the whole world” (v. 8), and with Paul’s expressed desire to go to and proclaim this good news to the Christians in Rome, for a stated purpose — “that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles” (vv. 10, 13; cf. vv. 15, 16).

b) *The Type of Saved Individuals Presented in vv. 18-32*

Then, with verse seventeen as a closing statement for the opening part of the chapter, the other type individuals are presented. And the type individuals presented in this section, rather than exercising faith, with a view to experiencing the salvation in view in verse sixteen, *do NOT exercise faith*; and, instead of one day experiencing this salvation, they will suffer “the wrath of God.”

EXACTLY the opposite of that seen in the previous section is seen in this section. And that becomes increasingly evident as one continues studying this section.

First of all, *note the subject matter at hand*. As previously stated, the gospel of grace (having to do with the unsaved and one’s eternal salvation) *is NOT* the message Paul called attention to various ways in the opening seventeen verses.

Then, to further illustrate that *saved individuals ALONE* can be in view throughout chapter one, note the words “knowledge” and “knowing” in verses twenty-eight and thirty-two.

Both of these words are translations of the Greek word *epignosis* (the verb form of this word is used in v. 32 [*epignosko*], meaning the same as the noun form in v. 28).

In the Greek text there is the regular word for knowledge (*gnosis*); and there is an intensified form of *gnosis*, formed through the preposition *epi* (meaning, “upon”) being prefixed to the word (*epi-gnosis*, which has to do with a knowledge of something beyond a regular knowledge, *i.e.*, some facet of a mature knowledge concerning the matter at hand).

And, according to I Cor. 2:14, the natural man (which is all that the unsaved person possesses) *CAN'T* even come into possession of a *gnosis* type knowledge regarding spiritual values (the Greek word used in this verse). The reason, of course, is because *he is spiritually dead*. He simply *CANNOT* understand spiritual values.

But the individuals in view in the latter part of Romans chapter one came into possession of *NOT ONLY a gnosis BUT an epignosis* type knowledge of that in view (which, textually [vv. 19, 21, 28], *could ONLY have had to do with spiritual values*).

HOW did they do this if unsaved?

They DIDN'T; they COULDN'T have done so!

And, aside from the preceding, it *WOULDN'T* make any sense at all to see the first seventeen verses correctly (a message [vv. 15, 16] *having to do with faith* [vv. 8, 16, 17], *in relation to fruit-bearing* [v. 13]), and then try to see the continuing latter part of the chapter (vv. 18-32) *dealing with a completely different subject, i.e., with the unsaved*.

Scripture is simply NOT structured in such a manner!

(Note that many unfaithful Christians *would NOT* fit into the category of those committing the sins mentioned in vv. 18-32, though some would [an ever-increasing number in today's world].

The division between these two types of saved individuals is on the basis of an exercise of *faith*. One exercises faith, the other does not.

And, there is *NO middle ground in this realm*. Individuals *EITHER* find themselves among those described in the first part of the chapter *OR* those described in the latter part of the chapter, regardless of whether or not they are guilty of the sins named in the chapter.

God, in this passage, appears to simply align the sin of turning away from a mature knowledge of the subject at hand — the good news regarding Christians having a part

in Christ's coming reign — with the grossest of the sins of the flesh; and this would show *NOT ONLY* what God thinks about the importance of this message *BUT* what He also thinks about anyone who would come into a mature knowledge of this message and *THEN* turn from it, shown in passages such as Heb. 6:1-9; 10:26-39.)S

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30; cf. Luke 11:23).

Romans 2:1-5, continuing from ch. 1, deals with the latter of the two types of individuals seen in the previous chapter. Then matters change in verse six — “Who will render to every man according to his deeds” — continuing for a number of verses, dealing with both types of individuals seen in ch. 1 (e.g., compare vv. 7 and 8; vv. 9 and 10).

Then, summing matters up, Paul states in verse sixteen:

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Paul's gospel has to do with the mystery, that which had been revealed to him at the outset of his ministry, by the Lord Himself.

And that encompassed within Paul's reference to the message which had previously been entrusted to him *could ONLY* encompass *ALL* which has previously been stated in the book, along with that which would follow. *ALL* had to do with this gospel entrusted to him.

Note that the Law is mentioned throughout parts of chapters two through seven, which would be understandable, for the message was still “to the Jew first.” And, with respect to the message, *the Law had to do with Israel and the theocracy* (rules and regulations governing the Jewish people within the theocracy).

And though the theocracy had long since ceased to exist, the shadow of regality still remained (Matt. 21:13; 23:2). Thus, it was only a natural thing to bring the law into matters under discussion, though it is clearly stated that the Law had *to do with Jewish believers ONLY, NOT Gentile believers* (Rom. 2:11-15).

Throughout chapters one through seven, in connection with two types of saved individuals, faith and works, Spirit and flesh are dealt with in a central respect throughout.

Everything builds into chapter eight, which forms an apex similar to that seen at the end of chapter ten and throughout chapter eleven in the Book of Hebrews.

Romans chapter eight, continuing from chapter seven, opens with that awaiting the two types of Christians introduced back in chapter one and dealt with in chapters two through seven.

An inheritance awaits one; and a disinheritance awaits the other.

For one, it is awaiting the manifestation of a new order of sons; and for the other, it is not having a part in this new order of sons (Rom. 8:18-23).

2) Hebrews

Continuing in Hebrews, the awaiting inheritance and new order of sons are seen dealt with the same way as in Romans.

The writer of Hebrews, after calling attention to certain things about Christ — His appointed position as “heir of all things,” His finished work on Calvary, and His present position at God’s right hand (1:2-4) — then does the same thing often seen throughout Scripture. The writer *moves FROM past sufferings and present conditions TO future glory.*

Using the Old Testament Scriptures, the writer of Hebrews, after calling attention to things past and present about

Christ, then moves on to *the GOAL toward which everything moves, Christ's coming glory.*

And to accomplish this purpose, he quotes from seven Old Testament Messianic passages (1:5-13).

(In Luke's account of Christ revealing Himself to His disciples [Luke 24:27, 44, 45], we're not told which Old Testament Scriptures He called to their attention. We're only told that He began at "Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

These Scriptures though, of necessity, *could ONLY have included BOTH Christ's past sufferings and His future glory* [vv. 25, 26]:

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Even though Christ, the One destined to rule and reign, had previously taught His disciples things concerning His rejection and sufferings [Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19; 26:1, 2], they still failed to grasp the overall picture and see both the sufferings and the glory in their proper perspective.

Thus, Christ's revelation of Himself to His disciples through the Old Testament Scriptures would have had to include passages concerning both.

And He could have drawn such dual teachings from Old Testament Scriptures such as those surrounding the life of Joseph in Genesis or those surrounding the life of Moses in Exodus, along with numerous other passages.)

Though the writer of Hebrews approaches the matter after a similar fashion seen in the preceding, there is a marked difference. The writer of this epistle begins by referring to Christ as *the appointed "heir of all things"* (v. 2) prior to

recording anything about *His past sufferings or His present position at God's right hand* (v. 3).

And he then reflects back upon *Christ's heirship* which he had mentioned *FIRST* by focusing his readers' attention *ONLY* upon Old Testament Scriptures which have to do with *THAT day when Christ will come into possession of this inheritance* (vv. 2, 5-13).

Thus, though there is a reference to Christ's past sufferings in the first chapter of Hebrews, *this is NOT what is mentioned first, and this is NOT what the chapter is about. And, accordingly, with the opening chapter introducing the book (as previously seen in Romans), this is NOT what the book is about either.*

This chapter begins with and centers upon teachings surrounding the coming glory of Christ, and this is accomplished mainly through reference to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Introducing the subject matter in Hebrews through different quotations from the Old Testament is strictly by Divine design.

There are "seven quotations" having to do with *Christ in His coming glory*.

"Seven" is a number which refers to *the completion of that which is in view*; and these seven quotations present a *complete, composite, Messianic portrait of Christ*, setting the stage for that which follows, covering the remainder of the book.

Hebrews is built around five major warnings; and to properly understand these warnings and related passages, *a person MUST understand the opening verses of the book in their correct perspective, for these verses CAN ONLY be looked upon as forming an introductory key to the remainder of the book* (much like the previously discussed opening two chapters of Romans).

The last of the seven quotations (1:13) leads directly into the introductory verse (1:14) for the first of the five major warnings (2:1-5).

The introductory verse to the first warning has to do *with an inheritance awaiting Christians*, which would be realized *with the Heir of all things, during the Messianic Era*. And the first warning refers to this inheritance as “so great salvation,” which has to do with Christ and His co-heirs replacing the incumbent rulers — Satan and his angels (2:3-5).

Thus, one can immediately see that, contextually, it would *NOT* be sound exegesis at all for one to attempt to understand this first warning apart from the Old Testament quotations which precede the warning.

NOR, in a larger context, would it be sound exegesis for one to attempt to understand the remaining four warnings and other related subject matter in the book apart from these introductory verses and this first warning.

Thus, it becomes a simple matter to see that Hebrews, in a different manner, deals *with the SAME subject matter* seen in Romans. And, as in Romans, one might say that Hebrews deals with Paul’s gospel, even though Paul didn’t write Hebrews.

(Note that Paul had seen and heard Jesus, on more than one occasion; but the unknown writer of Hebrews, from his statement in connection with “so great salvation,” evidently hadn’t heard the Lord [2:3].)

3) *Galatians*

The “gospel” seen in the opening verses of chapter one (vv. 6-9), identified in the latter part of the chapter (vv. 11, 12, 16), with additional comments in chapter two (2:1ff), sets the stage for the subject matter of the epistle.

Galatians, like Romans, was one of the epistles which Paul wrote during the Acts period. And the “gospel” alluded to at the beginning of the book — through those in this Church having been deceived by someone *proclaiming another gospel* — is clearly revealed to be Paul’s gospel in the latter

part of the chapter, *NOT* the gospel of grace.

This was the message which Paul had previously received from the Lord, the message that he proclaimed to Christians throughout the Gentile world.

Paul had previously proclaimed this message to those in the Galatian Church, but someone had come in with “another gospel,” something which greatly troubled Paul, for he well knew the importance of this message.

Note Paul’s words to those in this Church concerning the matter:

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (v. 8).

Galatians is an easy book to understand, *UNLESS* you go wrong on the identity of the gospel in view throughout parts of the first two chapters. If this gospel is seen and understood as the gospel of grace, as so many do, Galatians simply *CANNOT* be properly understood, for the introductory foundational material upon which the remainder of the book rests *will have been destroyed*.

Galatians, as *ALL* of the epistles — *NOT* just the thirteen Pauline epistles *BUT ALL* the others as well, *ALL* twenty-eight of them — *deal centrally with different facets of that seen in Paul’s gospel, NOT that seen in the gospel of grace*.

The gospel of grace is seen different places in these epistles, *BUT, compared to Paul’s gospel, it is seen VERY sparingly*.

Galatians has to do with the inheritance awaiting the new order of sons (*cf.* Rom. 8), an inheritance separate from the Law (God gave it to Abraham, by promise, preceding the Law [3:16-18]).

The epistle has to do with Christians being “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (3:26-29 [through their positional standing “in Christ,” who is Abraham’s Seed]).

And the book deals with the coming adoption of sons (having to do with a firstborn status in connection with the awaiting inheritance [4:1-7]), seen in Romans as well, in connection with the new order of sons (8:14-19).

Then, note the warning concerning following the works of the flesh rather than the spirit in 5:16-21, a very similar statement to that in Eph. 5:1-5. And in both Galatians and Ephesians, *an inheritance in the kingdom of God is in view, NOT eternal life.*

4) Ephesians

Ephesians begins with a reference to Christians having been blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (v. 3; cf. 2:6). Reference is then made to the adoption (v. 5) in association with an awaiting inheritance, which, as set forth at the beginning of the chapter, *is in heavenly places.*

And in relation to this awaiting heavenly inheritance, the incumbent rulers occupying the realm where this inheritance lies are dealt with three different places in the book (chs. 1, 3, 6).

The new order of sons (redeemed man), destined to take the realm which the present order of sons (angels) occupies, awaits the adoption and the manifestation of the sons of God, at which time the inheritance will be realized.

That is to say, *at THAT time, the government of the earth will change hands.*

In Eph. 1:18-23, the inheritance from verse eleven is referenced, though now seen as Christ’s “inheritance in the saints.” And, in relation to this inheritance, Christ has been raised from the dead, placed at God’s right hand, positioned “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,” a reference to the incumbent rulers presently occupying the territory where the inheritance lies (vv. 19-21).

And God has told His Son to sit on His right hand *UNTIL* “I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1), which, in relation to Eph. 1:18-23, would include these incumbent powers.

Another depiction of the same thing is seen again in Eph. 3:9-11. Opening the chapter, Paul began revealing things about the mystery which had been revealed to him, and his dealing with the mystery continues into verses nine through eleven.

In fact, once he had moved into these three verses, he was at the heart of the matter. These verses, as previously seen in chapter one, *have to do with the coming change in the government of the earth, wherein the inheritance is to be realized.*

Note these three verses:

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by [‘through’] the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

These “principalities and powers” (Satan and his angels), above whom God has placed His Son, presently occupy the heavenly places (in which Christians have already been blessed [1:3]), the places which Christ and His co-heirs are destined to occupy.

And this is being made known to these incumbent rulers through the very presence of the Church in the world — *presently in the kingdom but NOT presently occupying their proper place in the kingdom.*

The very presence of the Church in the world *is a declaration that a change in the government of the earth is in the offing.*

And the Book of Ephesians, in the closing chapter, sums the entire matter up by exhorting Christians to properly clothe themselves for the spiritual warfare at hand — a warfare against, *NOT* flesh and blood (individuals here on earth), *BUT* the “principalities and powers” presently occupying these heavenly places.

These incumbent powers are about to be replaced, they know this through the very presence of the Church in the kingdom which they rule, *and they are doing and will do everything in their power to prevent this from happening.*

Thus, the spiritual warfare rages, whether Christians know it or not (most don't). And to the victor *ALONE* belongs the spoils — whether man or angels.

Christians engaging the enemy in the proper manner *can ONLY* expect victory, for the Lord will go out ahead of them and fight the battle. *BUT*, Christians *NOT* engaging the enemy in the proper fashion, will experience just the opposite. Attempting to fight the enemy themselves *can ONLY result in defeat.*

The former will overcome in the battle, subsequently realizing an awaiting inheritance in that heavenly land; the latter though will be overcome in the battle, failing to realize an inheritance in that heavenly land.

5) *Colossians*

The entire first chapter of Colossians is a dissertation on Paul's continuing prayer for those in this Church relative to the things in the gospel which he had previously proclaimed among them, which had to do with “the hope of glory,” “fruit [fruit bearing],” and an awaiting “inheritance” (vv. 5, 6, 12).

Colossians is a companion epistle to Ephesians. Both begin the same way, dealing with things in the gospel which Paul had proclaimed among them. Then, after dealing with a number of these things, this gospel is mentioned (*cf.* Eph.

1:9; 3:1ff; Col. 1:25-29; 2:2).

Different things relative to this gospel are seen in each epistle. Ephesians deals quite a bit with the incumbent powers in the heavens (1:20-22; 3:1-11; 6:10-18). Colossians though only deals with these powers by way of passing (1:13, 16).

Both Ephesians and Colossians deal with Paul's desire that those in these Churches come into a mature knowledge (Gk. *epignosis* [ref. pp. 84, 85 in this chapter]) of the things having to do with the subject at hand, things surrounding the gospel which had been proclaimed among them (Eph. 1:17; 4:13; Col. 1:9, 10; 2:2; 3:10).

And, exactly as in Ephesians, so in Colossians (or, as previously seen in Romans, Hebrews, and Galatians). That seen in the opening chapter sets the tone for the remainder of the book.

Though reference is made in both books to salvation by grace (Eph. 2:1, 5, 8, 9); Col. 2:13, 14), *the subject matter throughout both books is Paul's gospel, NOT the gospel of grace.*

Note how Paul, in the opening chapter of Colossians, handles the present kingdom of Satan, the coming kingdom of Christ, and the relationship of Christians to both:

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (vv. 13, 14).

Verse thirteen, as it has been translated, would lead an individual to believe that Christians have been delivered from Satan's kingdom and placed in Christ's kingdom. That could be true in a futuristic respect, though *NOT* in a present respect, *for there is NO present kingdom of Christ into which Christians can be placed.*

The verse could be better understood in the sense of *Christians being caused to change sides with respect to two*

kingdoms — the present kingdom of Satan, and the coming kingdom of Christ.

Then, the next verse deals with “redemption” and “the forgiveness of sins.” The verse, contextually, has to do with Christians, through a payment, being released from one kingdom, with a view to another kingdom. And the payment is clearly stated to be Christ’s “blood.”

This is *NOT* a reference back to the time those in Colossae were saved *BUT* a reference to Christ’s present ministry as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His blood [presently on the mercy seat].

And, comparing Ephesians and Colossians at this point will provide a better understanding of matters in both books.

The word translated “redemption” in Col. 1:14 (Gk., *apolutrosis*, “to release, effected by payment”) is the same word translated “redemption” in Eph. 1:7, 14; 4:30. In each instance, *things in Paul’s gospel are in view, NOT eternal salvation.*

Thus far, looking at different epistles, the same subject matter — Paul’s gospel — is clearly seen to be dealt with throughout, though different ways in each epistle. In this respect, understanding more and more about Paul’s gospel can be derived *ONLY one way* — through comparing Scripture with Scripture, in this case, through comparing epistle with epistle.

6) I, II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians could be summarized as a *dissertation* to those in “the church of the Thessalonians” relative to the contents of Paul’s gospel, with the word “gospel” (Gk., *euaggelion*), as it is used throughout the epistle (used seven times), referring to this particular facet of the overall gospel message (1:5; 2:2, 3, 8, 9; 3:2, 6).

This aspect of the good news is introduced in I Thess. 1:5 as “our gospel,” setting the stage for the use of the word

gospel throughout both epistles. And, as Paul referenced this aspect of the good news different ways in Romans chapter one (“gospel of God,” “gospel of his Son,” “gospel of Christ” [vv. 1, 9, 15, 16; cf. Rom. 2:16; 16:25]), he does the same thing in I Thessalonians (“gospel of God,” “gospel of Christ,” “good tidings [‘gospel’] of your faith” [2:2, 8, 9, 3:2, 6]).

Note II Thess. 2:14 pertaining to the content of Paul’s gospel:

“Whereunto he called you by *our gospel*, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Then note the crux of the message, emanating from a proclamation of this good news which Paul was writing about to those in this Church, as seen in I Thess. 2:11, 12:

“As ye know *how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you*, as a father doth his children.

That ye walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto [‘with respect to’] his kingdom and glory” (cf. I Peter 5:6-10).

This then merges into a section on the rapture and that which lies beyond the rapture relative to the Son’s coming kingdom, seen in the latter part of chapter four and the first part of chapter five (4:13-5:10). Then, the remainder of the book has to do with Paul’s closing remarks.

Then, the second epistle to the Thessalonians simply continues where the first left off, beginning with *two types of Christians at Christ’s coming*, at the end of the Tribulation.

I Thessalonians left off with matters surrounding the rapture and subsequent accounting of Christians, preceding the Tribulation (4:13-5:10), wherein these two types of Christians had been seen — *the faithful, who had heeded Paul’s exhortations; the unfaithful, who had failed to heed these exhortations.*

For one (the faithful), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "salvation" awaited; for the other (the unfaithful), removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, "wrath" awaited (5:1-9).

Then II Thessalonians chapter one begins with events occurring at a time at least seven years later, following the Tribulation, following Christ's return.

And again, *two types of Christians are seen.*

The faithful are seen realizing an inheritance, realizing the "salvation" of I Thess. 5:9, in "his kingdom and glory" (II Thess. 1:5, 10-2:1); and the unfaithful are seen being denied an inheritance in His kingdom, realizing the "wrath" of I Thess. 5:9 (II Thess. 1:6-9).

7) *General Epistles*

The general epistles will be dealt with mainly through two of the seven epistles — II Peter and Jude.

Then, John's epistles have to do centrally with Christians being brought forth from above or from below, overcoming or being overcome (*ref. the author's book, Brought Forth from Above*).

And this same thing can be seen in John's seven letters to seven Churches, which will subsequently be dealt with under a different heading.

Peter began his first epistle by dealing with the saving of the soul, the life (1:1-25); and he began his second epistle by dealing with the importance of Christian maturity, an abundant entrance into Christ's kingdom, and that which had occurred when he, James, and John were on the Mount with Christ in Matt. 17:1ff, which has to do with Christ coming in His kingdom (1:1-21).

Parts of Peter's second epistle, reflecting back on his first epistle, and a verse from Jude will be dealt with in this section, beginning with the verse in Jude.

Note Jude 3:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

The words “earnestly contend” in Jude 3 are a translation of the Greek word *epagonizomai*. This is an intensified form of the word *agonizomai*, from which we derive our English word “agonize.”

The word *agonizomai* is found in such passages as I Cor. 9:25 (“striveth”), I Tim. 6:12 (“fight”), and II Tim. 4:7 (“fought”). This word refers particularly to “a struggle in a contest.”

In I Cor. 9:24-27, Paul pictured himself as *a contestant in a race*, with a victor’s crown to be won through a successful completion of the race. And he pictured himself running the race *in the most intense manner possible*, using the word *agonizomai* to describe his actions as he ran.

Paul *strained every muscle of his being* as he sought to finish the race in a satisfactory manner and be awarded the proffered crown.

And Paul sought to encourage others to run after the same fashion, keeping the same goal in view.

I Timothy 6:12 states:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called...”

This verse could be better translated:

“Strive [Gk., imperative of *agonizomai*; again, the word from which the English word ‘agonize’ is derived] in the good contest [*agon*] of the faith; lay hold on life for the age [the Sabbath rest of Heb. 4:4-9], whereunto thou art also called...”

Agon, translated “contest,” is the noun form of the verb *agonizomai*, translated “strive.” A contest/race is in view (same as I Cor. 9:24-27), and it is a “contest [race] of the faith.” It is “striving” *relative to the faith*.

The same thing is similarly stated in II Tim. 4:7a:

“I have fought a good fight [i.e., ‘I have strived (*agonizomai*) in the good contest (*agon*)]...”

The “contest” here, as in I Tim. 6:12 and as seen in the latter part of this verse, has to do with *the faith*. And the goal set forth in both sections of Scripture is the same:

“...I have finished my course [the contest/race], I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day...” (II Tim. 4:7b, 8; cf. I Tim. 6:12, 15, 18).

The contest or race here is *the same race set forth in I Cor. 9:24-27*, with one or more crowns in view at the end of the race. And successful completion of the race will result in the runner being crowned, *anticipating the coming rule from the heavens over the earth as a joint-heir with Christ* (called “life for the age” in I Tim. 6:12).

With these things in mind concerning the use of the word *agonizomai* in connection with “the faith” (an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom), note the expression “earnestly contend for the faith” in Jude 3.

In keeping with the other translations, the exact thought brought out by the word *epagonizomai* in Jude (as previously seen, an intensified form of *agonizomai*, the word used in I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7), could be better understood by using the translation “earnestly strive.”

Once again, a contest/race is in view; and *earnestly striving* “for the faith” — contextually, and in the light of

the preceding related Scriptures where *agon* and *agonizomai* are used — could be better understood in the English text by translating, *earnestly striving* “with respect to the faith,” *for that can ONLY be EXACTLY what is being stated.*

Earnestly striving “with respect to the faith” in Jude carries the identical thought of *striving* “in the good contest of the faith” in I Timothy.

The intensified form of *agonizomai* (used only this one place in the New Testament) undoubtedly appears in Jude because of the subject of the epistle (apostasy) and the immediate danger of the recipients of this message being caught up in the apostasy at hand.

Understanding *EXACTLY* what is involved in *earnestly striving* “with respect to the faith” in Jude is possibly best brought out in II Peter.

II Peter is the companion epistle to Jude. Both epistles deal with the same subject matter throughout — “faith,” and “apostasy.”

“Faith” appears first in both epistles (Jude 3; II Peter ch. 1), followed by “apostasy” *from the faith* (Jude 4ff; II Peter chs. 2, 3).

II Peter also occupies the same unique relationship to I Peter that Jude occupies relative to all the preceding epistles — Pauline and General.

II Peter chapter one is Scripture’s own commentary on Jude 3. And this commentary is perfectly in line with that which is stated about “the faith” at any other point in Scripture.

I Peter deals specifically with “faith” in relation to the salvation of the soul (1:1-11), and II Peter deals with “faith” (ch. 1) and “apostasy” (chs. 2, 3) in relation to this salvation.

The same order is set forth in Jude and the epistles which precede. The epistles preceding Jude — Pauline, Hebrews, and General — also deal specifically with the salvation of the soul. Jude then forms a capstone for the entire subject,

presenting, as II Peter, “faith” in relation to the salvation of the soul first (v. 3), and then “apostasy” in relation to the salvation of the soul (vv. 4ff).

Parallels in the sections on *apostasy from the faith* in both epistles (II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 4ff) clearly illustrate the oneness of Peter’s and Jude’s messages. Numerous identical subjects, events, and places are recorded in the same order (*cf.* II Peter 2:1-3 and Jude 4; II Peter 2:4-9 and Jude 6, 7; II Peter 2:10-14 and Jude 8-10; II Peter 2:15, 16 and Jude 11; II Peter 2:17, 18 and Jude 12, 13, 16; II Peter 3:1-13 and Jude 17-19).

“Apostasy” in both instances is *FROM the SAME* “faith” (*a departure FROM the faith*); and since Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture, a proper study on either “faith” or “apostasy” in one epistle would necessitate a study of the same subject matter in the other epistle.

The best available commentary on Jude is II Peter, along with other related Scripture; and the best available commentary on II Peter is Jude, along with other related Scripture.

Our main interest at hand is the parallel sections on “faith” in the two epistles. Where Jude devotes one verse to *earnestly striving “with respect to the faith”* (v. 3), Peter devotes the greater part of an entire chapter to *maturity in the faith* (ch. 1).

And this chapter, in the light of Jude and other related Scripture, is actually a dissertation on *earnestly striving “with respect to the faith,”* which will result in the one engaged in this “contest of the faith” (if he runs according to the rules) “receiving the end [‘goal’]” of his *faith*, even the *salvation of his soul* (I Peter 1:9).

Then, note the way Peter ends his second epistle, *referencing Paul*:

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen” (II Peter 3:15-18).

8) *Revelation 2, 3*

The seven epistles to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three are all identical in their basic structure. The opening verse of each epistle contains descriptive terminology, taken either word-for-word from the description of Christ given in chapter one or from material directly related to this description, *which has to do with judgment*.

Following this, each epistle begins with the statement, “I know thy works...” Then, certain things are stated concerning each Church relative to past works, and each epistle concludes with an overcomer’s promise.

Contextually, the “descriptive” aspects of Christ in chapters two and three *can ONLY* continue the thought of *judgment* from chapter one. The seven epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three provide additional information, forming commentary, with *judgment* continuing as the central issue at hand.

“Works” are then brought into the picture in each epistle, for it is *works* which will be reviewed when Christians are judged.

“Overcoming” and promised “blessings” then terminate each epistle, clearly revealing that only the overcomers — those possessing works comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones” — will be allowed to enter into the promised blessings.

There are seven different overcomer's promises in chapters two and three, and each promise is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment.

That is, these promises will be realized during the 1,000-year reign of Christ after Christians have had their works tried "by ['in'] fire" at the judgment seat.

Christ is seen as Judge in the midst of the seven Churches in chapter one, and chapters two and three provide information concerning why and on what basis these seven Churches — representing Christianity as a whole — are to come under judgment.

The word "overcome" is a translation of the Greek word *nikao*, which means "to conquer" or "to gain a victory over." The thought inherent in the word *nikao* (or *nike*, the noun form of the word) always means *to be victorious in a contest or conflict*.

The "overcomers" are *the conquerors, the victors; they are the ones who will have successfully run the race of the faith; they are the ones who will have conquered the numerous encountered obstacles along the way*.

Christians have been saved with a view to their being overcomers and bringing forth fruit. And THIS matter comprises the very HEART of the message which is to be proclaimed to Christians throughout the dispensation.

Israel has been set aside during this time, and God is calling another people — a separate and distinct people — "for his name," taken mainly from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14).

Those presently being called comprise an entirely *new creation*, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, forming *one new man* "in Christ." And God is extending to individual members of *this one new man* the privilege of overcoming and bringing forth fruit, with a view to their occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom.

The present dispensation is the time which God has set aside to accord redeemed man the privilege of overcoming and bringing forth fruit, and judgment at the end of this dispensation will reveal man's response to this privilege.

Some Christians will be shown to have overcome, possessing works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones"; but other Christians will be shown to have been overcome, possessing works comparable to "wood, hay, stubble."

The overcomers will, at that time, inherit the promised blessings of Revelation chapters two and three; but those shown to have been overcome will be denied these blessings.

THIS is the central subject matter dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation.

And as well, as has been shown, this is the central subject matter in all twenty-one of the previous epistles, which is the central subject matter seen in Paul's gospel.

(For additional information on the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3, refer to the author's book, *I Know Thy Works*.)

6

Salvation Message in the Epistles (II)

Israel Set Aside

The One New Man NOW Center Stage

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood [‘a regal priesthood’; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6; Rev. 5:9, 10], an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (I Peter 2:9-11).

Though God brought into existence and dealt with the Church in Acts, *ISRAEL (continuing from the gospels) remained His MAIN focus of attention throughout the book.*

God used *the one new man* “in Christ” (et al.) throughout Acts to carry *a continued message FROM the gospels TO the nation of Israel.*

But once God had completed His work with Israel in this respect, He then turned completely to *the one new man (a new creation, “in Christ,” separate from both Jew and Gentile [II Cor. 5:17]), the one NOW in SOLE POSSESSION of a kingdom which had been offered to Israel in the gospels, re-offered to Israel in Acts, and NOW completely taken from Israel.*

And that is *the centerpoint of the message in the epistles — Pauline, Hebrews, the general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3. EVERYTHING in these epistles, after some fashion, centers around and relates to THIS message.*

And since the Pauline epistles occupy almost three times as much space in the New Testament as Hebrews, the general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3 combined, most of the material in this part of the chapter will be taken from and reference places in the Pauline epistles. But it would matter little if this were reversed, for exactly the same thing can be seen in all the other epistles, though from different perspectives.

(Relative to the authorship of Hebrews, which many assign to Paul, it is a simple matter to show that Paul didn't write the book, though it is impossible to show who did write the book.

Different things about the book — the Greek text, the subject matter and the way that it is laid out — would *suggest* that someone other than Paul wrote the book.

But note Heb. 2:3. *The author of Hebrews was evidently not among those who had personally seen and heard the Lord. Paul though had spent a considerable length of time with the Lord, possibly as long as three years, taught by Him personally [cf. II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:15-19; Eph. 3:1-3].)*

The Gospel Message

The word “gospel,” as it is used in the New Testament, means *good news, glad tidings*. And the type good news, glad tidings in view *MUST ALWAYS be determined from the context*.

Then “salvation,” as seen throughout Scripture, both Testaments, always refers to *deliverance*. And the type deliverance in view, as when reference is made to “the gospel,” *MUST ALWAYS be determined from the context as well*.

But, a major problem in relation to *the gospel and salvation* exists throughout Christendom today. Bible students,

far more often than not, when they see the words “gospel” and/or “salvation,” think of only one thing, regardless of the context — the simple gospel message having to do with Christ’s death and shed blood, and salvation from eternal damnation.

However “salvation” in Scripture, having to do with “the gospel,” with “good news,” has *past, present, and future* aspects — *I have been saved* (Acts 16:30, 31; Eph. 2:8, 9), *I am being saved* (I Cor. 1:18; James 1:21), and *I am about to be saved* (Heb. 1:14; I Peter 1:9).

And the context *MUST ALWAYS* be referenced to ascertain which of these three aspects of salvation, which of these three aspects of the overall gospel message, is being dealt with in the passage.

And when one does this, he will find, *FAR, FAR MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, that present and future aspects of the gospel, of salvation, are being referenced, NOT the past aspect.*

Thus, one can immediately see that *something MAJOR is wrong in Biblical interpretation* when only the past aspect of “the gospel” and “salvation” seemingly come to mind when the words appear in Scripture. A large part of Scripture is being *erroneously dealt with* (actually, *well above eighty percent of the times* “salvation” or “the gospel” are referenced), *resulting in erroneous interpretation on the one hand and the door being closed to correct interpretation on the other.*

The Mystery, Paul’s Gospel

“Paul’s gospel” is inseparably related to *the mystery revealed to him*. And Paul’s gospel, along with the mystery revealed to him, are part and parcel with the way that the gospel and its salvation message are seen *throughout ALL of the epistles*.

And the preceding is what this part of the chapter is about, showing how the epistles deal with the whole of the matter.

To begin, note the following verses and sections of Scripture relative to *the gospel* and *the gospel's salvation message*, with *ALL of these verses and sections pertaining to present and future aspects of this gospel and its message, as will become evident in this part of the chapter:*

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery (as I wrote aforetime in few words,

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

Which in other ages [‘other generations’] was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Whereof I was made a minister...” (Eph. 3:1-7a; cf. 6:19, 20).

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit; and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit” (I Thess. 1:5, 6).

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [the handing down of information] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thess. 2:14, 15).

The epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, general epistles, and Rev. 2, 3) were written by at least five — probably six — different men (as previously seen, the author of Hebrews is unknown), and certain individual, distinguishing qualities and characteristics of the writers can be seen in their writings.

In Paul's case, his extensive use of the word "gospel" — how and why he used the word — forms a major trait which makes his writings different from those of any other writer of a New Testament book.

Paul, for evident reasons, appeared almost *obsessed* with this word, using it *FAR MORE EXTENSIVELY* than any of the other writers.

And he used the word both alone and through qualifying it various ways (e.g., "gospel," "gospel of God," "gospel of Christ," "gospel of his Son," etc.), usually referring to the same facet of the gospel, though possibly with different emphases.

Paul's writings comprise slightly less than one-third of the New Testament, but of the one hundred thirty-two times that the word "gospel" appears throughout the New Testament — in both its noun and verb forms (*euaggelion* and *euaggelizo* respectively) — almost two-thirds of these occurrences are found in the Pauline epistles.

The word appears twenty-three times in the synoptic gospels, seventeen times in the Book of Acts, six times in the general epistles, and three times in the Book of Revelation. But Paul used the word *eighty-three times* throughout his epistles.

Why did Paul use this word so extensively? The writer of Hebrews only used the word twice; James didn't use the

word at all; Peter only used the word four times; John didn't use the word in either his gospel or his epistles, though he used it three times in the Book of Revelation (but not in chs. 2, 3); and Jude didn't use the word in his epistle.

And beyond that, what was Paul referring to when he used this word?

As previously seen, the word "gospel" simply means *good news*. What was *the good news* to which Paul referred?

Invariably, people want to associate the word "gospel" with only one thing — *the good news pertaining to Christ's finished work at Calvary*.

They see the word "gospel" in Scripture, and this is what invariably comes to mind. And, looking at the word after this fashion, they seek to understand any portion of Scripture where this word appears solely in the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

And, interpreting Scripture after this fashion, they usually end up with a perversion, for, as previously seen, the word "gospel" is used *far more often than not* — including the Pauline epistles — referring to good news *other than Christ's finished work at Calvary*.

And erroneously understanding the word "gospel" to refer to Christ's finished work at Calvary, in a text where it doesn't, *will NOT ONLY do away with* that which the text does deal with *BUT* it will also often result in *a perversion* of the message pertaining to the simple gospel of the grace of God.

An example of the preceding would be the manner in which I Cor. 15:1-4 is usually understood. The word "gospel" appears in the first verse, and all four verses are usually looked upon as referring to the same thing — the gospel of the grace of God. But both the text and the context reveal that *such an interpretation is NOT correct at all*.

Paul used the word "gospel" in connection with that which is stated in verses one, two, and four; but it is evident that

this has NO reference to the gospel of the grace of God. Salvation in these verses is spoken of as an ongoing process in the lives of those to whom he was writing, and it is also spoken of as something which could be lost.

Neither would be true relative to the gospel of the grace of God which Paul had proclaimed to them “*first*,” referred to in verse three (referred to apart from the use of the word “gospel”).

And when individuals combine these four verses and attempt to make everything pertain to the gospel of the grace of God, the truths referred to in verses one, two, and four *are ALWAYS done away with*; and the gospel of grace, referred to in verse three, *is OFTEN corrupted* (through bringing elements [from vv. 1, 2, 4] over into this message, *where they do NOT belong*).

And the manner in which this passage is normally handled would be true numerous places in the Pauline epistles when the context is ignored and the word “gospel” *is made to refer to something which the text DOESN'T refer to at all.*

(I Corinthians 15:1-4 is dealt with in a more extensive manner later in this part of the chapter, following some preliminary material, allowing the passage to be better understood from a contextual respect.)

Paul’s extensive use of the word “gospel,” particularly his extensive use of this word to refer to something other than the gospel of the grace of God, goes back to his experiences at the outset of his ministry.

Before Paul ever launched out on the ministry to which he had been called — *to carry the good news rejected by Israel to the Gentiles* — the Lord took him aside and taught him all the various things about the message which he was to proclaim.

And after this, as Paul went about fulfilling his calling,

it was only natural for him to use the word “gospel,” meaning *good news*, to refer to the good news (which the Lord had personally taught him) which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world.

This “good news” had to do with *the mystery* revealed to Paul by the Lord (evidently after he had been taken to Arabia, then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17])

It had to do with believing Jews and Gentiles being placed together in “the same body” as “fellowheirs [‘joint-heirs’]” (Eph. 3:1-11); and these Jewish and Gentile believers (Christians), together, possessed a “hope” relative to one day occupying positions of honor and glory with Christ in “his heavenly kingdom” (cf. Col. 1:25-28; II Tim. 4:17, 18; Titus 1:2; 2:11-13; 3:7).

And Paul referred to *the good news* pertaining to this message as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), “the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4), “the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 11:7), “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:7), etc. Then, numerous times Paul simply used the word “gospel” alone to refer to this good news (Rom. 1:15; Gal. 1:6-12).

The fact that the mystery had been revealed to Paul (cf. Eph. 3:1-6; 6:19, 20), with Paul called to carry this message to Christians throughout the Gentile world, is the evident reason why he used the word “gospel” so often in his epistles. It was only *natural* for him to refer to the message which he had been called to proclaim through the use of a word which meant “good news,” for *the message was good news*.

For the unsaved, Christ’s finished work on the Cross was “good news.” As *unsaved individuals*, this was *THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear*.

But once *they had been saved*, they were then to hear the “good news” about *why* they had been saved. And,

as saved individuals, this was, as well, THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

And Paul's ministry centered around *the latter, NOT the former.*

Paul's ministry centered around proclaiming that which the Lord had revealed to him following his conversion. And the message contained therein dealt with the reason an individual had been saved (*cf.* Deut. 6:23); and this gospel, Paul's gospel, was *THE BEST NEWS redeemed man could ever hear*, which was why Paul let *NOTHING* stand in the way of his proclaiming this message.

This "good news" had to do with *the greatest thing God could offer redeemed man — occupying positions as co-heir with His Son, from a heavenly realm, in the coming kingdom.* To reference words which the writer of Hebrews used, it was "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3).

And Paul's repeated reference to the message pertaining to this offer as "good news" is one of the distinguishing characteristics of his writings.

1) The Mystery

"The mystery" revealed to Paul, "hid in God" *from the beginning* (the beginning of the ages), of necessity, forms an integral part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

There is *NOTHING* in the New Testament that *does NOT* have its roots in one or more places in the Old Testament. The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that drawn from foundational material previously set forth in the Old, *drawn mainly from the types* (*cf.* Luke 24:25-27, 44; I Cor. 10:6, 11; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:16-18, 25-27).

And, aside from the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the New Testament has to do mainly with *one major facet of Old Testament revelation:*

The New Testament, in this respect, has to do mainly with *numerous things pertaining to the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom* — first, as these things pertained to Israel (offered to Israel in the gospels, re-offered in Acts); and then, as these things presently pertain to the one new man “in Christ” (to whom the kingdom is presently being offered, after having been rejected by and taken from Israel).

“The mystery” was revealed to Moses first, though remaining *a mystery*, remaining *veiled*.

Then, some fifteen centuries later, God took Paul aside (evidently to Arabia [the same country to which he had previously taken Moses to reveal things pertaining to the theocracy], then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17]); and, in the person of His Son, God *opened up and unveiled* various things which He had previously revealed to Moses and other Old Testament prophets (cf. Luke 24:25-27).

(A “mystery [Gk., *musterion*, meaning, ‘a hidden thing,’ ‘a secret’]” in the New Testament can be defined as *something previously hidden in Old Testament revelation but now revealed* [cf. Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:4, 5].

Contrariwise, a mystery *CAN NEVER* be thought of as a reference to something not found at all in previous revelation, for, again, there is *NOTHING* in the New Testament that does not have its roots in one or more places in the Old Testament.

Thus, a “mystery” *pertains to something dealt with in previous revelation [seen mainly in the types] but not opened up [or fully opened up] to one’s understanding until a later point in time [seen mainly in the antitypes]*.

[Note that the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 2, 14) before a single word of the N.T. had been penned would have been *incomplete* had something later appeared in the N.T. that had not previously appeared in some form in the O.T.].

And the opening up and unveiling of a mystery [such as the mystery revealed to Paul following his conversion] could occur *ONLY through Divine intervention* [cf. Col. 1:25-27]. *ONLY the same Person* Who had previously established the mystery [via revelation, through one or more of the Old Testament prophets] could open up and make known the mystery [via revelation, to one or more of the New Testament writers].

And, in Paul's case, this can be seen through that which he himself testified concerning how he came into possession of a knowledge of the message which he had been called to proclaim among the Gentiles.

The Lord Himself took Paul aside, then moved Paul into His presence, and personally taught him — *One-on-one* — the message which he, in days ahead, was to proclaim to individuals [Christians] and groups of individuals [Churches] out among the Gentile nations.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself *personally* opened up and explained things to Paul which had previously been revealed through Moses and the Prophets [Gal. 1:11-18; Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:20-28; cf. Luke 24:25-27]; and Paul had been called to take these truths and proclaim them *to the one new man* "in Christ" out in the Gentile world, in both verbal and written form.)

Progressive revelation of this nature can be seen in Peter's reference to angels desiring "to look into" things pertaining to *the salvation of the soul*, things which the Spirit moved him to write about, and things intimately associated with the mystery revealed to Paul (I Peter 1:3-11).

These angels could only have previously seen, *in the Old Testament Scriptures*, that which was being opened up and unveiled to Peter (and others).

These were things which they desired to know more about; but, *apart from later revelation, which opened up and provided additional light on these things*, the saving of the soul in connection with sufferings and glory could be little understood.

Thus, “the mystery” revealed to Paul was simply *an opening up and an unveiling of things which had lain in the bosom of an existing revelation — a revelation wherein the roots of all Biblical doctrine lie.*

And, as previously stated, these things lay centrally in the types, which God had established in the beginning. Then, the various types which deal with the bride of Christ, and thus “the mystery,” do so in different ways.

For example, Genesis chapter two deals with the bride being removed from the body; Genesis chapter twenty-four deals with the bride being taken from the family; Genesis chapter forty-one, Exodus chapter two, and Ruth chapters three and four deal with the bride being taken from among the Gentiles.

And there are numerous other types as well, which, together, deal with *all the various facets of the matter.*

Further, “the mystery” has to do with revealed truth surrounding believing Jews and believing Gentiles—forming *one new man* “in Christ” (where there is neither Jew nor Gentile)—being *heirs together*, “of the same body.” It has to do with “Christ in you [*lit.*, ‘Christ being proclaimed among you’], the hope of glory” (*cf.* Eph. 2:12-15; 3:1-11; Col. 1:24-28).

Note again how “the mystery” is explained in so many words in the Book of Ephesians — a book centering around Christians one day realizing an “inheritance” *in heavenly places* (ch. 1), a sphere presently occupied by the incumbent rulers, Satan and his angels (chs. 1, 3, 6 [also, note how Paul closes and encapsulates the contents of the book in 6:19, 20]):

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery...

That the Gentiles [believing Gentiles] should be fellowheirs [with believing Jews], and of the same body [forming *the one new man* ‘in Christ’], and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel [which, contextually, could only be *the gospel*

of the glory of Christ, NOT the gospel of the grace of God!] (Eph. 3:3a, 6; cf. Eph. 2:11-15).

And a type which, among other things, would have to do with Jews and Gentiles together in one body would be the account of Caleb and Joshua's experiences, beginning in Numbers chapter thirteen and extending through the Book of Joshua.

The name "Caleb" means *dog*, and the name "Joshua" means *salvation*.

It was the "Gentiles" who were looked upon by the Jews as *dogs*, for whom *salvation was provided through the Jews* (John 4:22). And Gentile believers, with Jewish believers, are destined to realize *an inheritance together in a heavenly land*, just as Caleb and Joshua realized *an inheritance together in an earthly land* (cf. I Cor. 9:23-10:11).

And though God, in the beginning, designed various Old Testament types to reveal these things, once He had called *the one new man* "in Christ" into existence and Israel had rejected the re-offer of the kingdom, these things had to be *opened up and further revealed* to those comprising this new creation. Apart from such an opening up and unveiling, God's purpose for the present dispensation and the place which the Gentiles would occupy in this purpose could not be properly understood and realized (cf. Acts 10:45-48; 11:15-18; 15:12-18).

This is the reason that the Lord took Paul aside shortly after his conversion and provided extensive instruction concerning this whole overall matter, for these things comprised *the heart of the message* which he was to carry to individuals out in the Gentile world.

And this is the reason that Paul's ministry dealt mainly, *NOT* with the gospel of the grace of God, *BUT* with the gospel of the glory of Christ. And, correspondingly, this is also the reason that *the EMPHASIS in ALL of his epistles* is, likewise,

on the gospel of the glory of Christ rather than the gospel of the grace of God.

2) *Paul's Gospel*

As stated at the outset, the manner in which Paul used the word "gospel," meaning *good news*, **MUST ALWAYS** be *understood contextually*.

Paul did not use this word as it is used, almost without exception, in theological circles today — as a reference only to the gospel of the grace of God. Rather, Paul used the word, time after time, as a reference to *the good news* which had been delivered to him by "the revelation of Jesus Christ," following his conversion (Gal. 1:11, 12).

And, as previously stated, as well, Paul used the word, **FAR MORE OFTEN THAN NOT**, as a reference to the main crux of his ministry — *the good news pertaining to that encompassed within the mystery*, which had been delivered to him, which he, in turn, had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-29).

And the Christians to whom Paul ministered *would have easily understood his use of the word "gospel" from the context of that which he had either said or written* (for an example of the preceding, refer to the article, "Antichrist Cannot Appear Until...").

This *central thrust* of Paul's ministry becomes *self-evident* as one reads through the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles.

Paul proclaimed both the gospel of *the grace of God* and the gospel of the glory of Christ, but he proclaimed the good news pertaining to *the grace of God* with a view to his then being able to proclaim the good news pertaining to *the glory of Christ*.

Paul explained to individuals *HOW they could be saved*, with a view to subsequently being able to explain to them *WHY they had been saved*.

For example, note how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's final message to the Christians in Ephesus, through their elders (Acts 20:24-32). Or, for that matter, note also how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's epistle to the Christians in Ephesus (1:7ff; 2:1ff; 3:1ff). And a similar structure can be seen in other epistles as well, though the emphasis is *ALWAYS* on matters beyond salvation by grace.

But, because of an existing confusion in the dual nature of I Cor. 15:1-4 in this respect, attention will again be called to this passage in order to illustrate the point. As previously noted, this passage is invariably used erroneously by Christians, not in a dual respect, but in a singular sense — as a reference *only* to the gospel of the grace of God.

This passage though begins with *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (vv. 1, 2), then briefly moves back to *the gospel of the grace of God* (v. 3), and then comes back to where it began, to *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (v. 4) — *providing the complete gospel message, covering past, present, and future aspects of salvation.*

Paul, in this passage, *began* with the central message which he had been called to proclaim; *then he briefly moved back* to the message of the gospel of the grace of God, which, of necessity, must be proclaimed first to the unsaved; *then he came back* to the message which is to be proclaimed to individuals once they have heard the gospel of the grace of God — *the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world.*

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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" (I Cor. 15:1-4).

The problem emerges when a person attempts to *NOT ONLY* make Paul's reference to "the gospel" in verses one and two a reference to the gospel of the grace of God *BUT* make that stated in these verses pertain to his entire statement having to do with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in verses three and four.

It is the "death" of Christ *ALONE* which pertains to *the gospel of the grace of God*. The "burial" and "resurrection" of Christ *move beyond this* and have to do with things pertaining to *the continuing good news, the gospel of the glory of Christ*.

Note the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve. "Death" *ALONE* is seen in this chapter. "Death" had been decreed upon the firstborn, but God provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner*.

And it is EXACTLY the same today. "Death" has been decreed upon the firstborn, but God has provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner* (I Cor. 15:3).

In the type, this was done through the death of paschal lambs and the proper application of the blood from these slain lambs.

In the antitype, *this is done EXACTLY the same way*. The Paschal Lamb has died in the stead of the firstborn, but the blood *MUST* be applied (through believing [Acts 16:30, 31; Eph. 2:8, 9]).

"Burial" and "resurrection" though *move beyond this* in the type (the Red Sea passage and emergence from the Sea on the eastern banks [*cf.* I Cor. 10:2; Col. 2:12; 3:1ff]).

And it is EXACTLY the same in the antitype (I Cor. 15:4).

a) *I Corinthians 15:1, 2*

Verses one and two refer to the good news (the gospel)

which Paul had previously proclaimed to those in Corinth, which they had accepted and upon which they presently stood. This good news had to do with *present and future* aspects of salvation (not past, as seen in the gospel of the grace of God), it had to do with *holding fast* to that which had been proclaimed (with the possibility that there could be *loss*), and it had to do with Christians in Corinth either *believing* or *not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose (or cause)* in view.

The present and future aspects of salvation in this gospel are shown by the words, “By which also ye are saved [*lit.*, ‘...ye are being saved’]”; *holding fast* to the message proclaimed is shown by the words, “if ye keep in memory [*lit.*, ‘if ye hold (are holding) fast’] what I preached unto you”; and *believing* or *not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose* in view is shown by the words, “unless ye have believed in vain [*lit.*, ‘...believed apart from a purpose’ (or, ‘...believed without a cause in view’)].”

The present and future aspects of salvation have to do with *the salvation of the soul* (cf. James 1:21; I Peter 1:4-9).

The eternal salvation which we presently possess — *the salvation of the spirit*, wherein man passes “from death unto life” (cf. John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) — places man in a position where he can realize *the salvation of his soul*.

And these two aspects of salvation *MUST ALWAYS be kept completely separate, one from the other*.

The thought of Christians *holding fast* to those things in the message being proclaimed can be seen in the second and fourth warnings in the Book of Hebrews. The same word appearing in the Greek text of I Cor. 15:2 appears twice in the second warning (3:6, 14) and once in the fourth warning (10:23).

Holding fast in the second warning is with reference to “the heavenly calling” and “the hope” set before Christians

(vv. 1, 6); and *holding fast* in the fourth warning is with reference to this same hope — “the profession of our faith [*lit.*, ‘the confession of the hope’]” (vv. 23-25).

Then, the thought of Christians *believing without a purpose (or cause)* is a reference to the fact that a person has been saved *for a revealed purpose* — a purpose seen, in its entirety, in the gospel of the glory of Christ. And that purpose is the same as the purpose pertaining to man’s creation in the beginning — “...let them have dominion” (Gen. 1:26, 28).

Man has been saved with a view to his one day occupying *a position of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom*, which has to do with realizing the present aspect of salvation at a future date — *the salvation of one’s soul*.

Believing without a purpose (or cause) in verse two leads a person *nowhere*. An individual has been saved for a purpose, which can be seen and understood *only through believing the gospel which Paul referred to in the previous verse*; and this is a purpose *which can one day be realized ONLY through presently governing one’s life accordingly, set forth in verse two*.

b) I Corinthians 15:3, 4

Note the way verse three begins. Paul’s statement in verse three is *NOT AT ALL* a continuation of his subject matter from the first two verses. And this is really *self-explanatory*; Paul states this in so many words.

Verse three begins, “For I delivered unto you *FIRST OF ALL* that which *I ALSO* received...” That which he is about to reference is something which he had delivered unto them *FIRST* (prior to delivering the good news which he had previously referenced, in vv. 1, 2), and this is something which *he had ALSO* received (that is to say, *he had received this IN ADDITION to the good news referred to in vv. 1, 2*).

The message which Paul delivered unto those in Corinth *FIRST* can be seen by going back to I Cor. 2:1, 2:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Paul, when he *first* went to Corinth, couldn't begin with a message pertaining to the gospel of the glory of Christ, referred to in I Cor. 15:1, 2 (and also in I Cor. 2:1, preceded, as in I Cor. 15:1, 2, by a proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God [2:2; 15:3]).

When Paul *first* went to Corinth, after being rejected by the Jews and then going to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6), he found a city filled with unsaved Gentiles. And he *had to first* minister to those in Corinth on this basis. He *had to first* proclaim the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God unto them. He *had to begin* with “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” He *couldn't begin* elsewhere.

But, once individuals had believed, once individuals had passed “from death unto life,” *then Paul could move beyond this message.*

And this is exactly what he did. *Paul spent one and one-half years in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them [among those who had been saved under the preaching of the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God]” (Acts 18:11; cf. I Cor. 2:3ff).*

And this is why Paul, in I Cor. 15:1, 2, could allude to these things through simply calling their attention to “*the gospel [‘the good news’] which I preached unto you...*” They would know *EXACTLY* what he meant, for he had previously spent *an extensive period of time* teaching them things pertaining to this gospel.

And they would *also understand* the distinction when he moved back in time and referred to the gospel of the grace

of God which he, of necessity, had proclaimed to them *at the very beginning* (v. 3).

And, though moving back in this manner, Paul was then able to easily come back to the place where he had begun — *referencing things pertaining to the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world* (v. 4).

And this is the reason that Paul's ministry dealt mainly, *NOT with the gospel of the grace of God, BUT with the gospel of the glory of Christ*. And, correspondingly, this is also the reason that the emphasis *in ALL of his epistles* is, likewise, on the gospel of the glory of Christ rather than the gospel of the grace of God.

That is to say, Paul spent his time proclaiming *THAT which he had been called to proclaim, THAT which the Lord had taught him personally — as previously seen, taught him One-on-one over a period of time evidently encompassing about three years* (II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-18).

And the Pauline epistles, to be PROPERLY dealt with, MUST be UNDERSTOOD and TAUGHT accordingly.

Hebrews, the General Epistles, and Revelation 2, 3

And *EXACTLY* the same thing as seen in the Pauline epistles *can be seen in Hebrews, the general epistles, and the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3*.

The emphasis in ANY of these epistles, as in the Pauline epistles, is NOT on the gospel of the grace of God (corresponding to that foreshadowed by God's restorative work on day one in Gen. 1) BUT on a continuing aspect of salvation (that foreshadowed by God's continued restorative work on days two through six in Gen. 1).

And, whether Pauline, Hebrews, the general epistles, or Rev. 2, 3, this is *ALL* with a view to God's complete work in man's salvation, with a time of rest (that foreshadowed by God resting in Gen. 2:1-3 [cf. Heb. 4:1-9] following six days

of restorative work).

It was *ALL* laid out at the beginning, in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture.

Understand matters correctly at the beginning, and things in subsequent Scripture, in a natural respect, will fall into place.

BUT, misunderstand or ignore the way God laid it all out at the beginning, and you are left without a base for all which follows, providing a main reason, if not the main reason, for much of the error which exists today.

Concluding Thoughts:

A question could only be in order at this point in the article:

IF the central subject matter in the epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, the General Epistles, and Rev. 2, 3) exists as previously described — *which, as clearly shown, DOES exist* — *WHY the silence on this subject from the pulpits of the land today?*

OR, that question could be applicable in previous Scriptures, in Acts, and then the gospels, with related things being asked about these parts of Scripture as well.

In relation to the epistles, some facet of a message concerning the coming kingdom of Christ, associated with the contents of Paul's gospel, *SHOULD BE* at the center of *ANY* ministry from *ANY* pulpit on *ANY* Sunday, or at *ANY* other time, throughout the Churches of the land today.

An individual simply CANNOT deal with the central subject matter in the epistles apart from following some semblance of the preceding! And the subject matter in preceding revelation (Acts, the gospels, then the O.T.) *CAN ONLY* be seen as closely aligned, for later revelation flows out of earlier revelation, with a central subject seen throughout.

But, resulting from the woman placing leaven in the three measures of meal early in the dispensation in Matt. 13:33, that is far from the way matters exist today.

And this act, after two millenniums, near the end of the dispensation, has ultimately brought matters to pass as seen not only in Matt. 13:33 (“the whole... leavened”) but also in Rev. 3:14-20 — a Church which thought of itself as “rich,” “increased with goods,” and needing “nothing”; but, in reality, was “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

(*Ref. the author’s books: Chapter VI, “Parable of the Leaven,” in Mysteries of the Kingdom, and Chapter XI, “Seated on the Throne,” in Judgment Seat of Christ.*)

Because of all this, *IF* the epistles were dealt with after a correct fashion today, in almost any Church of the land — fundamental and liberal alike — the message would very likely be seen *as heretical*.

On the other hand, the converse of that is equally true.

That being taught and accepted in today’s Christianity is invariably material dealing with the epistles presented in an incorrect manner in this respect (*e.g.*, things surrounding Paul’s gospel being presented as having to do with salvation by grace — something almost universally taught).

And that’s where we are in today’s enlightened Christianity, which is why, at the time of Christ’s return, He will not find the true message seen throughout the epistles (or Scripture as a whole [O.T., N.T.], leading into the epistles) being taught in the Churches of the land:

“...When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?” [Luke 18:8b].

A negative response is designated by the manner in which the question is asked in the Greek text.

And the reason for this negative response is given in Matt. 13 and Rev. 3 — *a rejection of Paul's gospel, over time, resulting in a completely leavened Church, one thinking that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," BUT, in reality, are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*

7

Salvation Realized in Revelation

*The Same Salvation Seen in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles
The Kingdom of This World Became That...
The End Seen from the Beginning*

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

The opening verse of the final book in Scripture relates, at the outset, both *WHAT the book is about and HOW the book has been structured.*

The book, by its very name — *The Apocalypse* — relates that it is about *an unveiling*. *And that unveiling is specifically stated to be “The unveiling of Jesus Christ,” which, in chapter ten, is declared to be synonymous with completing “the mystery of God” (v. 7).*

And the preceding has been accomplished on the pages of a book that has been structured in a specifically revealed manner — “signified” (Gk., *semaino*) — *the ONLY book in Scripture* specifically stated to have been structured in this manner.

Subject, Structure

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

1) *An Unveiling*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to John 1:1, 2, 14, the incarnation was simply the Word (the Old Testament Scriptures) becoming flesh. There is *the written Word* (which is living [Heb. 4:12]), and there is *the living Word* (which is the written Word, inseparably connected with the Father, made flesh).

The Book of Revelation is thus an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures *through a Person, through the Word which became flesh.*

And any thought of an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures extending into and including an opening up of the New Testament Scriptures as well would be completely out of place, for there is *NOTHING* in the New that cannot be found, after some fashion, in the Old.

If there were, *there could NOT be the necessary corresponding completeness between the written Word and the living Word at a time BEFORE the New Testament had even begun to be penned.*

2) *Signified*

The word “signified,” as previously seen, is a translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of the word for “sign” (*semeion*).

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

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types, numbers, signs, and metaphors* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known.

And this *MUST* be recognized, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history.

Or if *numbers, signs, or metaphors* are used — which they often are — he will fail to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured in *a particular manner*, closely

related to the manner in which John was led by the Spirit to structure his gospel.

The Gospel of John was built around eight signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry, and these signs were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (between 33 A.D. and about 62 A.D. [John 20:30, 31]).

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

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

Note the first of these three usages, within context:

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

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

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

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino*, has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader *from a somewhat indirect means to a direct means*,

using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter.

And this is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation different ways. The numerous *numbers* and *metaphors* would be two main ways. The structure and contextual setting of the seven short epistles to the seven Churches in Rev, 2, 3 would be another way (explained in the next section). And all illustrative means of this nature in the book are, they would have to be, in line with the meaning of the word *semaino* and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

A Synopsis of the Book

In one respect, the entire Book of Revelation has to do with future events. However, in another respect, because of the way that the book has been structured, chapters two and three *can be understood in both historical and prophetic respects.*

And the preceding should not be thought strange in any way. John, in his gospel, uses “types” (Gk., *tupos*, the noun form for the word translated “signified”) in a similar respect, for types are simply historic events used to foreshadow future events.

1) Revelation 1-4

Beginning this brief synopsis, note the book’s three-part division, seen toward the end of the first chapter:

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” (v. 19).

“The things which thou hast seen” would refer to that which John had seen between the time that he was removed from Man’s Day on earth and transported into the Lord’s Day in heaven (v. 10) and the time that he was told to write these words (v. 19).

And John was moved forward in time as well, for he was moved to a time which could only be immediately following the present dispensation.

That which John had just seen at the time he was told to write in verse nineteen had to do with *the complete Church in Christ's presence*. And Christ was *NO* longer occupying the office of High Priest for Christians; rather, He was *NOW* occupying the office of Judge, about to judge Christians (vv.11-16; cf. v. 20).

(The preceding would be evident a number of different ways — different things about the scene itself [*the complete Church in heaven, in the Lord's presence, at a future time, in the Lord's Day*], and the manner in which Christ is dressed or depicted [*as a judge, NOT as a priest*]).

The complete Church — ALL Christians throughout the dispensation [the dead raised, removed with believers alive at that time] — is depicted through John's experience [removed into the Lord's Day, then seeing "seven candlesticks" in Christ's presence (vv. 12, 13), representing *the seven Churches* in chs. 2, 3 (v. 20, "seven" showing *completeness*)].

Note that Christ occupies the office of *High Priest* for the Church *ONLY* during the present dispensation. *ONCE* the dispensation is over, a change will occur. He will *THEN* occupy the office of *Judge*.

To show one distinction between *a priest* and *a judge*, note the placement of the girdle which Christ is seen wearing — about "the paps," *the breasts* [v. 13]. A priest wore the girdle about the waist, a judge about the breasts [cf. Rev. 15:6].)

Thus, the scene in Rev. 1:10ff depicts the complete Church (through John's experience), at the end of the dispensation, removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day, in Christ's presence, awaiting judgment.

Then, chapters two and three, showing "the things which are" (v. 19), *continue from chapter one and relate that judgment*.

Each of the seven epistles is structured in an identical manner, *having to do with works, with a view to overcoming*. And each epistle has *a different overcomer's promise*.

Thus, this future judgment of Christians will be *on the basis of works, with a view to showing whether an individual has overcome or has been overcome, with the overcomers ALONE realizing the seven different overcomer promises*.

(For additional information on Rev. 2, 3, refer to the author's book, *I Know Thy Works*.)

The third part of Rev. 1:19, "the things which shall be hereafter," is seen in Rev. 4:1ff (the Greek words *meta tauta*, "after these things," seen once in Rev. 1:19 is seen twice in Rev. 4:1):

"After this [Gk. *meta tauta*] I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter [Gk., *meta tauta*]."

Revelation 4:1 depicts the same thing previously seen in Rev. 1:10 — John removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in the Lord's Day in heaven.

But this time, the heavenly scene begins at a time *following* the judgment of the Church, having to do with that which will transpire *after these things* (*AFTER things having to do with the judgment of Christians in chapters two and three*).

And the manner in which the entire matter is structured — using seven existing Churches in Asia — a history of the Church throughout the dispensation is shown as well (a history which takes Christendom *FROM* Ephesus [*which left its "first love"*] *TO* Laodicea [*"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"*]).

And showing both a dispensational history and a future judgment of the Church through seven existing Churches is one of the intricacies allowed by the manner in which the book has been structured.

The scene in heaven following events of the judgment seat depicts God seated on a rainbow-encircled throne, surrounded by twenty-four crowned elders (Gk. *presbuteroi*, referring to “older ones” in relation to that in view), seated on thrones.

And following scenes of praise and adoration directed toward the One seated on the throne (by the elders and four living creatures), the twenty-four elders arise from their thrones, fall down before God, and cast their crowns before His throne (vv. 4-11).

These elders, these *presbuteroi*, since they are crowned and seated on thrones, *can ONLY be seen depicting “older ones” in relation to the government of the earth* (the only government which textually, or contextually, could be in view).

And this one thing *ALONE* would identify them as angels, for man, at this point in the book, has yet to replace angels in the government of the earth.

Note the complete scene. The Christians who are to replace angels have been identified immediately prior to this (chs. 2, 3).

And these angels, in possession of crowns having to do with the government of the earth, willingly relinquish these crowns, with a view to Christ and His co-heirs taking the kingdom.

Thus, a scene of this nature, following the judgment seat, is *EXACTLY what one would expect*.

For the *FIRST TIME in the history of the earth an event of this nature CAN OCCUR!*

And, showing the gravity of the matter, this occurs immediately following events surrounding the judgment

seat, even before the redemption of the inheritance (dealt with in the next three sections in this chapter, covering Rev. 5, 6, 8, 9).

(The preceding only touches on material which can be gleaned from the action of these twenty-four elders in Rev. 4.

For additional information on this subject, refer to Chapter IV, "Crowns Relinquished in the Lord's Day," in the author's book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

2) *Revelation 5*

All of Revelation chapter five is taken up with events surrounding the introduction of *a seven-sealed scroll and the search for and identity of the ONLY One found worthy to break the seals (or look in the scroll)*, with the seals of this scroll beginning to be broken in the next chapter.

Properly understanding that which is in view through the introduction of this seven-sealed scroll and the breaking of the seals on the scroll is *ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY* for a proper understanding of ALL which both precedes and follows in the Book of Revelation.

ALL preceding [chs. 1-4] has built into chapter five. And the judgments seen in succeeding chapters, beginning in chapter six, are the judgments unleashed through the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll.

These judgments are God's terms for the redemption of the inheritance. And, as well, a revelation of the Son is brought to pass through a breaking of the seals on this scroll.

Two seemingly separate matters are involved — the redemption of the inheritance on the one hand, and a revelation of God's Son on the other. *BUT*, the manner in which God has structured this book, stated at the outset, allows God to bring the revelation of His Son to pass through bringing the redemption of the inheritance to pass.

And bringing about the revelation of the Son through the redemption of the inheritance, the entirety of that revealed — from the scroll itself to the breaking of the seals of the scroll — is fraught with illustrative statements throughout, explaining matters through moving from indirect to direct (“signified”).

Then, something else is seen through a revelation of the Son being part and parcel with the redemption of the inheritance.

The redemption of the inheritance is also part and parcel with two other things, with these two things automatically occurring with the completion of the redemption of the inheritance:

- 1) The bride, previously revealed at the judgment seat, becoming Christ’s wife (*cf.* Ruth 3, 4).
- 2) A repentant and converted Jewish nation restored as the wife of Jehovah (*cf.* Jer. 32, 33).

The completion of the redemption of the inheritance, automatically bringing the preceding to pass, will allow the complete millennial rule to be established after the manner in which God set matters forth in the beginning.

Man, exercising regality, *CANNOT rule alone*— something unchangeably established at the outset in Genesis.

Adam had been created to rule the restored domain (Gen. 1:26-28). And Eve, created in Adam, subsequently removed from Adam’s body, and brought into existence as a separate entity, was to rule with Adam — he as king, and she as consort queen (Gen. 2:18-25).

The preceding forms the type, with Christ and the one to be removed from His body forming the antitype. And the antitype *MUST* follow the type in exact detail.

Adam, apart from Eve, was incomplete, for she was a part of his very being (Gen. 2:23, 24).

In the same respect, Christ, apart from His bride, is incomplete, for she is part of His very being (*cf.* Eph. 5:30-32; Heb. 2:10).

Then, the same relationship between God and Israel would, as well, have to exist.

Thus, the redemption of the inheritance involves more than just the territory itself. A revelation of the Son, the bride becoming Christ's wife, and Israel being restored as the wife of Jehovah *are ALL inseparably involved.*

In short, the oft-overlooked manner in which the Book of Revelation has been structured can be seen in its fulness in chapter five, for the beginning part of the book builds into this chapter and the remainder of the book is simply an outworking of that seen in this chapter.

3) *Revelation 6*

In Chapter five, with the introduction of the seven sealed scroll, a search was made for One worthy to break the seals on the scroll.

This search was made "in heaven," "in earth," and "under the earth" (an all-encompassing statement), with *ONLY* One person found worthy — "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," "the Lamb that was slain" (vv. 5-7, 12).

Christ was introduced as a "Lion," then seen as a "Lamb," for the redemption of the inheritance (necessitating death and shed blood) occurs through *judgment* (a "Lion" figure). And God's terms for the redemption of the inheritance are shown by the judgments which occur as each seal is broken.

The first six seals are broken in chapter six, and the seventh at the beginning of chapter eight.

It is evident (from things stated) that the breaking of the first four seals (vv. 1-8) — depicting the actions of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse — *are ALL-encompassing, succinctly covering the complete panorama of ALL the judgments,*

those occurring during and immediately following the Tribulation, preceding the Millennium.

Then, all subsequent material in the book through chapter nineteen (Rev. 6:9ff) forms commentary — the sinews, flesh, and skin to clothe the skeletal framework (that succinctly stated about the actions of the four horsemen when the first four seals were broken).

This would be much like Gen. 1:1-2:3 forming an opening, foundational base covering the whole panorama of 7,000 years, with the remainder of Scripture providing commentary — the sinews, flesh, and skin to clothe the skeletal framework.

Then the breaking of the sixth seal, concluding this chapter, presents one of three places in the book where Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation is seen, with each of these three places presenting a different word picture and revealing different things about His return (*cf.* 6:12-17; 14:14-20; 19:11-21).

Then, following the introduction of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and the results of their ministry during the last half of the Tribulation (ch. 7, *cf.* ch. 14), events surrounding the breaking of the seventh seal are seen at the beginning of chapter eight.

(The breaking of the seven seals, as previously seen, are divided into two parts — the first four seals, then the last three seals.

“Four” is the number of *the earth, which is the domain, the inheritance, being redeemed*; and “three” is the number of *Divine perfection*.

Thus, this separation of the seven seals into two parts — four, and three — shows *Divine perfection in the redemption of the inheritance [something also shown in the complete panorama of judgments — seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials of wrath; “seven” and “three,” both complete numbers].*)

4) Revelation 8, 9

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets...

The first angel sounded...” (Rev. 8:1, 2, 7a).

At the time of the breaking of the previous seal, the sixth seal — in keeping with the manner in which the book has been structured (“signified”) — the government of the earth is seen shaken to its very foundations, in complete disarray (vv. 12-16).

And, in association with this scene, the heavens are opened (vv. 14, 16), and “the great day of His wrath” is declared to be at hand (v. 17).

“The great day of His wrath” in this verse, *CAN’T* be a reference to the Tribulation (Daniel’s Seventieth Week), for the timing of this statement, textually, is *AFTER* the government of the earth has been brought into complete disarray, something which results from the judgments occurring during the Tribulation.

Further, this wrath, as well, is associated with Christ’s return (textually, contextually, and in the types and the Prophets).

Thus, “the great day of His wrath” occurs following Man’s Day, following Christ’s return, during the succeeding Lord’s Day, evidently during the first seventy-five days of this time (Dan. 12:11-13).

In this respect, judgments dealt with by the Old Testament prophets in connection with the Lord’s Day *ALWAYS* have to do with judgments *following* the Tribulation, *following* Christ’s return, *NOT* with judgments during the Tribulation (*during Man’s Day*), *preceding* Christ’s return (note particularly the Book of Joel in this respect [1:15; 2:1ff; 3:1ff; cf. Zeph. 1:14, 15]).

(Confusion arises when individuals attempt to see the Lord's Day beginning on earth in Rev. 6:1, when the first seal is broken, beginning and running concurrently with the last seven years of Man's Day.

However, Scripture *NEVER* deals with Man's Day and the Lord's Day in such a manner — time during one running concurrently with time during the other. In Scripture, *the Lord's Day begins ONLY AFTER Man's complete 6,000-year-Day has run its course.*)

The seven trumpet and seven vial judgments (Rev. 8-11, 15, 16) are the judgments unleashed when the seventh and last seal is broken.

These judgments occur FOLLOWING the Tribulation, preceding the Millennium. And they occur AFTER Christ has returned to earth, accompanied by His mighty angels, along with Moses and Elijah (ref. continuing data dealing with Mal. 4:1-6).

(The seven trumpet and seven vial judgments form different descriptions of *the SAME judgments.*

That occurring when the first trumpet is sounded and the first vial is poured out have to do with *the SAME judgment.* And so it is with the sounding of the other trumpets and the pouring out of the other vials.

That occurring when the vials are poured out simply provide *additional information concerning that occurring when the trumpets are sounded.*)

The sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven vials — judgments upon the kingdom of the Assyrian yet future (Micah 5:5) — have their counterpart in judgments upon the kingdom of the Assyrian in history, during Moses' day (Isa. 52:4).

Moses had returned to the Jewish people, Christ will have returned to the Jewish people. Judgment upon the kingdom of the Assyrian followed in Moses' day and will

follow in Christ's day.

Thus, if an individual wants to know what will happen to the Jewish people and the kingdom of this world at the time Christ returns, all that person has to do is begin reading at Ex. 4:19 and continue to Ex. 15:19.

The preceding takes an individual throughout the complete panorama of events which will occur following Christ's return, events having to do with Israel and the nations, ending *EXACTLY* as seen in the type.

The most intense part of the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll will evidently occur *after the seventh and last seal has been broken, particularly when the fifth and sixth trumpets sound (fifth and sixth vials are poured out)*.

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

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

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

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

Malachi closed the Old Testament with the preceding “great day of His wrath” in view.

This time begins with that stated in Mal. 4:1, followed by promises concerning what the Lord would subsequently do for His people in that day (vv. 2, 3).

Then attention is called to “the law of Moses,” the rules and regulations governing the people within the theocracy — an evident allusion to past disobedience and ensuing results, along with a call for repentance, obedience (v. 4). And this is followed by God’s promise to send Elijah back to the Jewish people “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (vv. 5, 6).

Note how this closing chapter in the Old Testament reads:

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

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

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:1-6).

The preceding is the manner in which the Old Testament closed, with four hundred silent years following.

The break in these silent years came with events surrounding the appearance of Israel's Messiah and the subsequent offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation (Luke 1:5ff).

And the heavens once again closed over six decades later with Israel's climactic rejection of the proffered kingdom (Acts 7:51-59; 28:23-29).

BUT, after a two-day wait, a 2,000-year wait, the heavens are about to once again open for the Jewish people. And that is seen when the sixth seal is broken, with the heavens opened and Christ returning to the Jewish people, accompanied by His mighty angels, along with Moses and Elijah.

(Note "the Son of man coming in His kingdom" in Matt. 16:28-17:5. Moses and Elijah are with Christ.

This is *NOT* something like [*i.e.*, a preview, etc.] of "the Son of man coming in His kingdom." *Rather, this is EXACTLY what the text states, with time moved ahead 2,000 years — "the Son of man coming in His kingdom."*

Then, angels are also seen accompanying Christ at this time [Matt. 24:31; II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:11-14].

For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapters III, IV, "Moses and Elijah in That Day" {Parts I, II}, in the author's book, *Coming in His Kingdom*.)

When the sixth seal of the scroll is broken, the heavens will open, and Christ, accompanied by angels, and Moses and Elijah, will return to the Jewish people. Then, through the breaking of the seventh and last seal on the scroll, the prophecy in the last chapter of the Old Testament, Mal. 4:1-6, will be worked out.

A period of silence followed the recording of these words by Malachi, and a period of silence will precede the fulfillment of the things seen in this chapter in Malachi (Rev. 8:1, 2, 7ff).

The Kingdom of This World Became That...

The end result of all seven seals being broken and the scroll being opened up is seen in events covering all of chapter ten and the latter part of chapter eleven (vv. 15-19):

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ [*lit.*, ‘The kingdom of this world became that of our Lord, and of His Christ’]; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

The whole of the matter surrounding this scroll being opened and everything being brought to pass within the confines of that seen by the breaking of the seals on the scroll occurred *between the time that the Son took the sealed scroll from His Father’s right hand in chapter five and a mighty angel appeared in chapter ten holding the opened scroll.*

This mighty angel, the seventh and last of the angels to whom seven trumpets were given *when the seventh and last seal of the scroll had been broken* (cf. 8:2; 10:7; 11:15), *brings the entire matter to a close.*

The seven-year Tribulation, along with events immediately following (which usher in the Messianic Kingdom), will be over at this point in the book.

The earth, through the depicted judgments, will have been redeemed. And events in succeeding chapters (chs. 11-19), along with events back in chapter seven, simply form detail and commentary concerning events occurring during the time of the judgments seen in chapters six, eight, and nine, when the seals on the scroll were being broken.

Thus, as previously seen, the actions of the seventh angel with the opened scroll in chapter ten *bring matters to a close*. And events in conjunction with his sounding the seventh and last trumpet — with the corresponding seventh and last vial in ch. 16 being poured out as well (the same judgment, providing added commentary [vv. 17-21]) — *could ONLY form what would have to be understood as the APEX of this closing book in Scripture* (as previously referenced, note the same events described another way in ch. 11 [vv. 15-19]).

And there is a grandeur to the scene at hand which one needs to simply step back from and allow Scripture to depict.

That seen in Revelation chapter ten is the manner which God has chosen to announce THE COMPLETION of 6,000 years of redemptive work.

And this is the manner which God has chosen to “declare the decree” seen in the second Psalm.

Note Ps. 2:5-7 in this respect:

“Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath [speak unto the Gentile nations coming against restored Israel and Israel’s King, in Jerusalem in vv. 1-3], and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee [brought His Son forth in the sense seen in the text, placing Him on the throne in Jerusalem].”

Recap of the Scroll, All of the Seals Broken

The seven-sealed scroll from chapter five — the title deed to the earth — seen with all the seals broken in chapter ten, contained *the COMPLETE redemptive terms for the inheritance, the earth*. There were *NO terms* outside of this scroll, and the terms of the scroll had to do with *judgment*.

As previously seen, within the scope of these redemptive terms, these judgments, there were *three sets of sevens* — *seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials*. The seven trumpets formed the judgments of the seventh seal; and the seven vials paralleled and formed further commentary on the seven trumpet judgments.

Thus, both the seven trumpets and the seven vials formed the judgments of the seventh seal.

ONCE these judgments had occurred — *ONCE* the seven trumpets had sounded, and/or the seven vials had been poured out — *God's COMPLETE redemptive terms of the scroll had been met*.

1) Action of the Mighty Angel

The action of the seventh angel is expressed in chapter ten in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, *which brings the mystery of God to a completed or finished state — a FULL disclosure of that seen as a mystery up to this point in time*.

And this is brought to pass through a *FULL revelation (a FULL disclosure) of God's Son* (Rev. 1:1), *FULLY revealing the Father* (Rev. 10:7; cf. John 14:8, 9), which necessitates a completion of everything seen in the Book of Revelation up to and including events occurring at the time of Christ's return in the latter part of chapter nineteen.

Then, the same thing is seen in chapter sixteen, though from a different perspective, by a seventh angel pouring out the seventh vial of wrath (v. 17).

This act is expressed in the chapter by a great voice coming out of the temple in heaven saying, "It is done [*lit.*, 'It has been finished'].¹" This is the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating *action completed in past time, existing during present time in a finished state.*

EVERYTHING will have been completed at this point in time!

The inheritance will have been redeemed, the bride will have become the Lamb's wife, and the sceptre will have changed hands!

Satan will have been bound and cast into the abyss, and the Messianic Era can NOW be ushered in!

At this point in time, for THE FIRST TIME in the history of the earth, THAT seen in chapter ten CAN OCCUR!

2) The Transfer of Power

The matter concerning *the kingdom of this world* (a kingdom which has been under Satan's dominion and control since time preceding man's creation) *becoming that* "of our Lord, and of his Christ" is *CLEARLY stated in a symbolic manner in chapter ten* (vv. 1-7).

THEN, it is CLEARLY stated again in so many words in the next chapter, when the sounding of the seventh trumpet (with the corresponding pouring out of the seventh vial) is repeated (11:15-19).

In chapter ten, at the completion of *ALL* the judgments connected with the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll from chapter five, a "mighty angel" comes down from heaven (an angel clothed with "a cloud," "a rainbow" on his head, his face shining "as it were the sun," and his feet appearing as "pillars of fire").

This angel is then seen holding this scroll, *IN AN OPENED MANNER, OUTSTRETCHED TOWARD HEAVEN!*

At this point in the book, Christ will have broken ALL of the seals; and ALL of the judgments connected with the breaking of these seals will have come to pass!

THE WHOLE of the matter will be OVER when this “mighty angel,” holding the opened scroll, has come down from heaven and has placed “his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth [*indicating COMPLETE DOMINANCE AND CONTROL of the redeemed inheritance, the redeemed possession*]” (*cf.* Dan. 7:13, 14).

(A rainbow is seen two times in the Book of Revelation [4:3; 10:1]. The rainbow, as first seen in Scripture in Gen. 9:13-16, appeared following the storm.

And the rainbow is used after a similar manner, *in relation to judgment*, in the Book of Revelation.

It is seen *surrounding God's throne in chapter four in connection with a past judgment of Christians* [chs. 1-3]; and it is seen in chapter ten *on the head of the “mighty angel” who sounds the seventh trumpet, in connection with a past judgment of Israel and the nations* [chs. 6-9].

In both instances, *JUDGMENT WAS/WILL BE OVER*.

Through the first judgment, *the bride* will have been made known [chs. 1-3]; and, through the second judgment, *Israel* will have been brought to the place of repentance, *the inheritance* will have been redeemed, *the bride* will have become the Lamb's wife, and *a saved and converted Israel* will have been restored as the wife of Jehovah [chs. 6-19].)

This “mighty angel,” holding the opened scroll with all of the seals broken, standing upon the sea and the land, cried with “a loud voice, as when a lion roareth” (*cf.* Rev. 5:5), resulting in “seven thunders” being heard (a possible reference to the seven vial judgments [chs. 15, 16], which will have also been fulfilled at this time).

Then this angel “lifted up his hand [*lit.*, ‘his right hand’] to heaven” (evidently the hand holding the opened scroll — the title deed to the earth — with *ALL* of the seals broken [*cf.* Rev. 5:1, 7], *showing the One in heaven that the entire matter surrounding the redemption of the inheritance*

HAS BEEN FINISHED [cf. vv. 2, 5-7]).

The Son is NOW in possession of the redeemed inheritance, the earth. He NOW possesses a completely clear title deed to the earth [cf. Ps. 2:8]. And the angel holding this title deed swore by the One Who liveth throughout all of the ages, Who had created all things, that there should be “time no longer” (v. 6b).

(“Time” [Gk., *chronos*] in this verse is translated “delay” in most English versions [ref. NKJV, NASB, NIV]. However, *chronos* means “time,” not “delay” [e.g., *chronos* prefixed to “meter,” forming *chronometer* (a means to measure time, a timepiece)].

Translating *chronos* as “delay” is an interpretation, NOT a translation. And it is really NOT a correct interpretation.

The reality of the matter is that *there are NO delays in God’s plans and purposes*. Everything occurs at *predetermined times*, which renders any thought of “delay” in Rev. 10:6 an impossibility.

This angel’s statement has to do with *time in relation to Man’s 6,000-year Day, plus the seventy-five subsequent days seen in Dan. 12:11-13*. At the time seen in Rev. 10:6, *ALL of this previous time will be OVER. NOW the Messianic Era can be ushered in.*)

This statement about “time” by the angel with the seventh trumpet in Rev. 10:6 is *essentially the same* as the statement by the angel pouring out the seventh vial in Rev. 16:17 when announcing *the completion of the matter at hand*, using the perfect tense — “It is done [lit., ‘It has been completed’].”

These two statements by these two angels with the seventh and final trumpet and vial are simply *two ways of saying the same thing*.

EVERYTHING, in both instances, is past—an announcement

concerning *A TERMINAL POINT in time*, having to do with the completion of the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll (10:6); and an announcement concerning *A TERMINAL POINT in events*, which, as well, has to do with the completion of the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll (16:17).

3) *Mighty Angels, Chapters 10, 19*

A similar scene at the time of Christ's return, as it pertains to the transfer of governmental power and control, is depicted in Rev. 19:17, 18 — "*an angel standing in the sun,*" *uttering a cry concerning the overthrow of Gentile powers:*

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

This angel, uttering this cry, stands within that used in a metaphorical sense in the Book of Revelation to symbolize *the center of governmental power* (cf. Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 12:1; 16:8).

And the symbolism used in Rev. 19:17 is introduced by and reflects back on the previous six verses, depicting Christ returning through an opened heaven as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The right to take the sceptre and rule the earth at this time will have previously been given to the Son by the Father (Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15; cf. Dan. 4:17, 25; 5:18-21; Matt. 20:23). And the angel standing in the sun — standing in that symbolizing *the central governing authority* — is seen *announcing this fact*.

The preceding is the manner in which the Lord, through angels, presently governs the whole of the universe. This is also the manner in which the Lord, through man, will govern this earth during the Millennium and rule beyond the new earth out in the universe during the ages following the Millennium.

The Lord, throughout this time, will continue to govern the whole of the universe, *in an UNCHANGED manner* (Gen. 1:26-28; Job 1:6, 7; 2:1, 2; Rev. 3:21).

Thus, since the actions of angels acting under established laws become the actions of the Lord as well, in one respect it is immaterial whether the angel seen in Rev. 10 is viewed as an angel or as the Lord. *The whole of the matter would be THE SAME. Either way, these actions would be no more or no less the Lord's actions; i.e., either way, these actions would be THOSE of the Lord.*

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's article, "Actions Under Established Laws.")

The End Seen from the Beginning

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

Declaring the end from the beginning; and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:9, 10).

God sees the end from the beginning, and He has structured His Word in this manner, *NOT ONLY* at the beginning *BUT* numerous places throughout.

Both Testaments begin *EXACTLY the SAME way*, with John's gospel occupying its proper place beginning the New Testament — "In [the] beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1a); "In

[the] beginning was the Word..." (John 1:1a).

(For information on John's gospel in the preceding respect, refer to Appendix II in this book, "Place and Importance of John's Gospel."

Also, see the author's articles, "Misuse of John 20:30, 31," and "Repentance, Belief in John's Gospel, and the author's book, *Moses and John*.)

As well, each book beginning each Testament relates *the complete story* — *from the beginning to the end* — in the opening two chapters of each, relating *EXACTLY the same story, though from different perspectives* (Gen. 1:1-2:3; John 1:1-2:11).

Then, the remainder of each book, providing commentary for the beginning of each book, as well, relates *the same story, told two different ways* ("types" in Genesis, "signs" in John [cf. Heb. 1:1, 2]). And beyond this, throughout each book, there are numerous beginning points which take matters to the same end.

The preceding is simply the manner in which God has structured His Word throughout.

Scripture begins with the creation of "the heavens and the earth," with the earth singled out in this manner (Gen. 1:1).

Scripture then continues with a ruin of the earth (Gen. 1:2a), later revealed to have resulted from Satan (the ruler whom God had placed over this province) acting outside the established laws under which he was to govern the province (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:12-19).

Scripture then continues with a restoration of the ruined province, over a six-day period, with man created at the end of the six days to rule the restored province (Gen. 12b-28).

But before the sceptre could change hands, Satan brought about man's fall, disqualifying him from realizing the purpose for the kingdom being restored and his subsequent

creation; and this allowed the incumbent ruler to continue holding the sceptre.

(A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler, though disqualified, continue holding the sceptre *UNTIL* his replacement is *NOT ONLY* on the scene *BUT* ready to take the sceptre [e.g. Saul and David, typifying Satan and Christ

Ref. the author's articles, "Saul and David, Satan and Christ" and "Actions Under Estantiated Laws."

A knowledge of the preceding principle will explain *WHY* Satan, though disqualified to rule, remains on the throne today, millenniums later; *WHY* God dealt with Israel relatively to a theocracy in the O.T. [both earthly and heavenly aspects]; *WHY* God continued dealing with Israel relative to a theocracy in the gospels and Acts [heavenly aspect]; and *WHY* God is dealing with the Church relatively to a theocracy today [heavenly aspect].

And a knowledge of details within all of the preceding — details provided throughout God's Revelation to man — will explain *WHY* God is taking millenniums of time to work matters out and bring them to pass.)

Following the fall, God set about to restore man, which would allow him to one day realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning.

And God is carrying this out in complete accord with the established way in which He restores a ruined creation, set forth in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture.

The latter would be restored in complete accord with the former, for the former *was established perfect in the beginning*. Man would be restored over a six-day period, with each day in the latter restoration being a 1,000-year day (II Peter 3:8).

Man, at the end of six days, 6,000 years, of redemptive work, would be brought back into the position for which he was created in the beginning, realizing that position.

And that is what Scripture is about, realizing the end seen from the beginning.

(For additional information on the preceding section, refer to Appendix I in this book, “Biblical Subject and Structure.”)

APPENDIX I

BIBLICAL SUBJECT AND STRUCTURE Genesis... John...

EACH TESTAMENT BEGINS AND CONTINUES THE SAME WAY

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9, 10).

“In the beginning God created the heaven [‘heavens’] and the earth...” (Gen. 1:1ff).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...” (John 1:1-3ff).

In Genesis, beginning Scripture, the first thirty-four verses (1:1-2:3) relate the complete story in initial, skeletal form, showing the end (2:1-3) from the beginning (1:1).

In John’s gospel, which should begin the New Testament, *NOT* Matthew’s gospel, the first sixty-two verses (1:1-2:11) again relate the complete story in initial, skeletal form, showing the end (2:1-11) from the beginning (1:1-3).

Both Genesis and John — showing the end from the beginning — deal with *creation* (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3), *a ruin of the creation* (Gen. 1:2a; John 1:4, 5), *six days of restorative work* (Gen. 1:2b-25; John 1:6-2:1), followed by *a seventh day of rest* (Gen. 2:1-3; John 2:1-11).

A skeletal framework of events is set forth at the beginning of Genesis, *showing the subject matter of the Old Testament*; and the same thing is seen at the beginning of John, showing *the continuing subject matter of the New Testament*.

The whole of Scripture has been established *in a septenary structure of this nature, clearly shown at the beginning of each Testament* (Gen. 1:1-2:3; John 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1).

Beginning Genesis, God is seen working six days to restore a ruined material creation, with man created at the conclusion of God's work on the sixth day, created to rule the restored creation (the man and woman together).

THEN, God rested the seventh day.

BUT, Satan brought about man's fall, with a ruined condition again befalling the restored creation (cursed).

Thus, man, following the fall, *NOT ONLY* found himself disqualified to rule the earth *BUT* the creation itself *could NOT* be ruled by man in its resulting cursed condition.

Thus, *NOT ONLY* did man have to be redeemed *BUT* the creation (once again) as well.

Beginning John's gospel, the entire matter is again seen.

God is again seen working six days to restore a ruined creation, *BUT this time it is ruined man being restored (a ruined creation), with a view to the seventh day once again.*

(The pattern concerning how God restores a ruined creation, along with that which follows [the reason, purpose for the restoration], was *UNCHANGEBLY SET in a PERFECT MANNER in God's restoration of the ruined material creation in the opening verses of Genesis [1:2b-25]*.)

Thus, EXACTLY the same pattern can ONLY be followed — it MUST be followed — in man's restoration.

God, relative to ruined man, would work six days restoring man, with a view to a seventh-day rest. And, as clearly seen *in BOTH Genesis and John, this seventh-day rest*

would be the time when man would hold the scepter and rule a restored earth.

And God gave *the Sabbath* to Israel as a “sign,” referencing Gen. 1:2b-2:3, *in order to keep His complete redemptive plans and purposes ever before His people* [Ex. 31:12-17; cf. Ex. 20:8-11].

Then, note Heb. 4:1-9 relative to Christians.)

THEN, in Rev. 5-19, at the end of God’s six days of work restoring man, He is seen restoring the earth once again, with a view to restored man ruling the restored material creation, in complete keeping with the reason/purpose for man’s creation in the beginning, in Gen. 1:26-28.

And *ALL* of this comes together on the seventh day, which is the direction toward which *ALL* Scripture moves.

(For information on the importance and place of John’s gospel in the N.T., refer to Appendix II in this book.

Also see the first five chapters in the author’s book, *Signs in John’s Gospel*, along with the foreword and introduction in the author’s book, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles*.

For information on the restoration of the earth, both in Gen. 1 [past] and Rev. 5 [future], refer to Part II [“In the Loins of Abraham”] in the author’s article, “Salvation Is of the Jews.”)

From the Beginning to the End From the End to the Beginning

It was ALL set forth at the beginning, the end seen from the beginning. And this is easy to see from the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis or the opening sixty-two verses of John.

Note that this *CANNOT* be seen *UNLESS* a person correctly understands how each Testament opens, revealing the structure and following content of each.

(For example, this *CANNOT* be seen in the teaching that Genesis chapter one has to do with six days of creation.

NOR can it be seen in the teaching that Gen. 1:1 has to do with the beginning of the restoration of a prior [unseen] ruined creation [a view held by many, though less widely taught than the former].

The first of the two preceding views [creation only], *has a beginning, BUT NO end [NO end to show the end from the beginning]*.

The second of the two views [restoration only] *has an end BUT NO beginning* [disallowing the end to be seen from the beginning, for *NO* beginning exists].

And *NOTHING* really needs to be said about the opening verses in John's gospel in the preceding respect, for matters have been taken awry preceding John, in Genesis.)

Knowing things about the preceding — how God has structured His Word, showing the end from the beginning — is simply one way that the correct interpretation of the opening verses in both Genesis and John can unquestionably be correctly ascertained and understood.

There are other ways, *mainly the way that the WHOLE of subsequent Scripture is structured and the direction toward which ALL things move.*

As well, the complete gospel message (salvation past, present, and future) *is seen ONLY in the correct view of Gen. 1:1-2:3, or in John 1:1-2:11.* And with these opening verses in both Genesis and John either little understood or misunderstood throughout Christendom, is it any wonder that the salvation message itself is, as well, little understood or misunderstood today?

(Note that the complete salvation message has its basis in the septenary structure opening Genesis [opening the O.T.], set forth again opening John [opening the N.T.].

Refer to the author's article, "Salvation in the O.T., N.T.")

Time, or Eternity?

As previously seen, the Bible deals *with "time,"* six and seven days, foreshadowing six and seven thousand years. Scripture has very little to say about that which occurred before this time, and Scripture has very little to say about that which will occur after this time.

God has revealed *ONLY* enough to allow man to see and understand the place which His dealings with man and the earth during a septenary period of time (7,000 years) occupy in relation to revealed events both preceding and following this time.

Contrary to common belief, Scripture deals sparingly with "eternity." Rather, as seen, Scripture deals with "time," seven thousand years of time, which is made quite clear at the beginning of each Testament.

A structured seven-thousand-year period permeates the whole of Scripture, NOT the eternal ages beyond.

Viewing the whole of Scripture with respect to foundations and building on the foundations (*which is the ONLY correct way to view matters and study Scripture*), the superstructure resting on the foundation would have Gen. 2:4ff resting on Gen. 1:1-2:3, or John 2:12ff resting on John 1:1-2:11 (*the SAME superstructure resting on the SAME foundation, seen from DIFFERENT perspectives*).

And "time" in the superstructure *MUST* remain in complete keeping with "time" in the foundation, *among ALL other things*. Since the foundation deals with events during a revealed period of "time" (seven days, 7,000 years), *so MUST the superstructure*.

In other words, the whole of Scripture is about that set forth in a septenary arrangement of events beginning both Testaments.

There is simply NO way that matters could be seen and understood after ANY other fashion.

And, other than a limited number of widely scattered references to events during “time” preceding and beyond the seven thousand years (“time” beyond the 7,000 years is dealt with in the next section [including Rev. 21, 22, closing Scripture]), *EVERYTHING* in the superstructure remains in complete keeping *with EVERYTHING* in the foundation.

(And the widely scattered references to events during “time” either preceding or following the 7,000 years, along with Rev. 21, 22, are, as previously stated, undoubtedly given so that man can place and better understand revealed events during the 7,000 years in their proper perspective.)

Thus, the complete seven days, the complete seven thousand years, are seen beginning both Testaments, with God revealing the end from the beginning each place.

Olam, Aion, Aionios

Since the whole of Scripture in both Testaments deals with events during “time” (six and seven thousand years of time [6,000 years of restorative work, followed by a 1,000-year day of rest]) *WHY* does practically the whole of Christendom read and see Scripture dealing with events during “time” (present) in relation to “eternity” (future)?

And, in a respect, that is a rather easy question to answer, though, at the same time, it is a very difficult question to deal with.

The simple answer is threefold:

- 1) Problems with the English translation, mainly with three words — *olam* (O.T.) *aion*, *aionios* (N.T.).
- 2) How individuals understand Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 and the relationship these sections have to all subsequent Scripture.

3) The resulting central message *seen throughout ALL Scripture.*

Olam is the main Hebrew word translated “eternal” throughout the Old Testament, and *aion* or *aionios* (the adjective form of *aion*) are the two Greek words translated “eternal” throughout the New Testament.

Question: *HOW* can the superstructure deal with “eternity” when the foundation deals *ONLY* with “time,” limited to seven thousand years?

And the answer is quite simple:

It CAN'T!

The foundation, so to speak, *is the SET standard.* And “time” in the superstructure *MUST remain in COMPLETE keeping with “time” in the foundation, the SET standard.*

The matter is similar to the relationship between the timepiece in Greenwich and the celestial chronometer.

The timepiece in Greenwich *is ALWAYS set by the unchangeable, celestial chronometer, NEVER the other way around.*

And, in like manner, that which follows Gen. 1:1-2:3 and John 1:1-2:11 *MUST ALWAYS remain in complete accord with that SET in these foundational passages, the SET, unchangeable standard.*

1) No Word for “Eternal”

Something little understood is the fact that *NEITHER* the Hebrew text of the Old Testament *NOR* the Greek text of the New Testament has a word for “eternal.”

Olam in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is the main word translated “eternal.” This word has to do, *NOT* with “eternity,” *BUT* with “a long period of time,” which would be “time” related to the subject at hand.

And though the word is used of God numerous times, it would still relate, first and foremost, to time in the foundational structure. True, God transcends “time,” *BUT*, it would also be true that Scripture deals with events during “time,” *NOT* during “eternity.”

Aion and *aionios* in the Greek text of the New Testament are associated with “time” the same way that *olam* is associated with “time” in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

(For a comprehensive understanding of the way *aion* and *aionios* are used in the Greek text of the New Testament, refer to Appendix IV, “Aion, Aionios,” in this book.

The contents of this appendix article were taken from Marvin R. Vincent’s *Word Studies in the New Testament* [a widely recognized four-volume Greek word study, edited over one hundred years ago, still a standard work today].)

The Greek philosophers, preceding the writing of the New Testament, used *aion* to reference “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” with *aionios* used in their later writings after the same fashion.

And this is the type usage and understanding of these two words that continued through the time that the New Testament was written.

And, as well, this would be in complete keeping with that seen in the foundational material beginning each Testament. Understanding the use of *olam*, *aion*, or *aionios* as “eternal” — at any point from Moses to John — would *NOT ONLY* be out of line with this foundational material *BUT ALSO* with an understanding of *HOW* these words were understood and used at the time Scripture was written.

Thus, the understanding and use of *olam* throughout the approximately one-thousand-year period during which the Old Testament was written (abt. 1,400 to 400 B.C.) and of *aion* and *aionios* during the first century when the New Testament was written (during and shortly beyond the Acts

period) would be in complete keeping with the thought of “time,” *NOT* “eternity,” as set forth in the foundational data beginning both Testaments.

In short, *it would be IMPOSSIBLE* to understand any one of these three words as “eternal” throughout this time and, at the same time, *remain in COMPLETE KEEPING with the foundational material.*

And *exactly* when and how *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* subsequently came to be understood as “eternal,” is, in reality, a moot point. The foundation (seen beginning both Genesis and John) simply will *NOT* permit the words to reference “eternity”: *NOR* will the use and understanding of these words throughout the period extending from Moses to John permit such.

(This departure, misusing these words, resulting in that which exists today, is often traced to Jerome’s particular choice and use of Latin words to translate *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* in his *Latin Vulgate* [400 A.D.], a translation which became somewhat of a standard reference work for later translations.

However, again, that is neither here nor there. The foundation has been ignored, an understanding of the words has, accordingly, changed over the centuries, and Christians are left with the results today [existing translations, reflecting the way that the words have come to be understood, *NOT* *were understood*, with far-reaching, negative ramifications].)

2) Expressing “Eternal” in Scripture

Aion, as it is used in the Greek New Testament, often references “an age” (*ref.* the author’s article, “Ages and Dispensations”).

We derive our English word “aeon,” or “eon.” from *aion*. And, when the text does project matters out beyond the seven days, the seven thousand years, there is a double use of *aion*, or *aion* is used in a plural form (refer to the evident reason for this earlier in this appendix article).

On the double use of *aion*, note verses such as Rev. 1:6; 4:9; 5:14, where the words, “forever and ever,” appear in the English text (KJV). These words are a translation of a double use of *aion*, with both words plural and articular. The more literal translation would be “the ages of the ages,” referencing the endless ages of eternity.

On the plural form of *aion*, note verses such as Luke 1:33 and Heb. 13:8. The plural form should literally be translated “ages,” referencing endless time, the endless ages of eternity.

And a similar double use of *olam* appears in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (e.g., Ps. 103:17; Dan. 7:18).

3) A Question

An interesting question about the preceding, set forth by more than one Greek scholar from past years has to do with *HOW* to translate the double use, or particularly the plural, of *aion* *IF* the singular form is to be translated and understood as “eternal.”

Or, a related question could be asked as well. *WHY* should there even be a double use or plural of this word *IF* the singular is all-encompassing in relation to “time”?

BUT, all of that is neither here nor there anyway, for the word doesn’t mean “eternal,” evident from the foundation upon which Scripture rests (having to do with “time,” *NOT* with “eternity”) and its use at the time Scripture was written.

Age-Lasting and/or Eternal Salvation

As seen in this appendix article, *SALVATION* in Scripture *has to do, FIRST and FOREMOST, with the seventh day, the earth’s coming Sabbath, the Messianic Era, set forth in the septenary foundation beginning Scripture. It would have to, for that seen in the subsequently revealed superstructure MUST remain in complete keeping with that first seen in the previously revealed foundation.*

Matters concerning regal power and authority over this earth *MUST* be dealt with *FIRST*. *The rights to and exercise of this regal power* are what Scripture is about, quite evident in both the foundation and the superstructure.

Scripture is simply *NOT* about the ages beyond the Messianic Era (*NOT* about eternity), though enough has been revealed to show that man will continue in a regal capacity during these ages (note particularly Rev. 21, 22).

And THIS continued regal activity will have to do with a rule from the new earth, evidently throughout the universe.

The Kingdom, Seen in... Age(s) Past, Man's Day, the Lord's Day, Ages Future

There would be one or more ages in the past, preceding the restoration of the earth and man's creation. We're not told.

Man's Day, lasting six days, 6,000 years, comprises the subsequent age.

The Lord's Day, lasting one day, 1,000 years, will comprise the age following Man's Day.

And, following the end of the Lord's Day, the end of the seven days, the end of the 7,000 years, a new age will begin, with an evident endless array of ages following.

As shown in this appendix article, Scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, is about God's work with man, during *one age* (Man's 6,000-year Day), with a view to *a subsequent age* (the Lord's 1,000-year Day), *NOT* about God's work with man relative to the eternal ages beyond; and *the WHOLE of the matter* is in relation to *a kingdom*.

EVERYTHING moves toward the Lord's Day and a kingdom realized in that day, NOT toward the eternal ages beyond.

The WHOLE of Scripture has to do with what some have termed "the angelic conflict," carrying the matter through to completion. And that has to do with Satan and his angels

ultimately being put down, with Christ and His co-heirs *THEN* taking the kingdom and reigning for 1,000 years, *UNTIL that seen in I Cor. 15:24, 25 has been brought to pass:*

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

ONLY THEN, can the ages beyond come into view, referenced briefly at the end of Scripture in Rev. 21, 22.

The Goal

The goal toward which ALL things in Scripture move, as previously seen, is set forth at the beginning of each Testament.

But note *that goal* as seen in three passages of Scripture, extending from Calvary to 2,000 years later when *the goal* is realized — the first having to do with the Son’s outlook on matters as He paid redemption’s price at Calvary, the second having to do with both the Father and Son’s outlook from heaven today, and the third when *the goal* has been realized.

1) The Son’s Outlook at Calvary

“...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2b).

Christ, enduring the sufferings of Calvary, looked ahead to “the joy that was set before him,” considering “the shame” of little consequence compared to “the joy” (thought set forth by the Greek word translated “despising”).

“The joy” *can ONLY* have to do with events of the coming seventh day, the coming Lord’s Day, the Messianic Era

(compare the companion parables of the talents and pounds in Matt. 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27, with the word “joy” used this way in Matt. 25[vv. 21, 23, using the same word in the Greek text as used in Heb. 12:2; cf. Eccl. 2:26]).

2) *The Father and Son’s Outlook Today*

“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies“ (Ps. 110:1, 2; cf. Acts 7:55, 56).

Little needs to be said. The preceding is quite self-explanatory, without comment.

3) *That Toward Which All Scripture Moves Realized*

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15, ASV).

Again, little needs to be said. The preceding companion passages are quite self-explanatory.

The kingdom of this world under Satan will have been completely destroyed (Dan. 2, 7), and the Father will have given the kingdom to His Son.

And the Son’s reign (“forever and ever”) will extend

throughout the last eon of the present earth and all the eons of eternity on the new earth.

Available Material, a Suggestion

There are several English translations — all edited well over one hundred years ago — which render *olam*, *aion*, and *aionios* in a manner other than “eternal.”

Three versions of this nature, covering both the Old and New Testaments, are readily available today:

Young’s Literal Translation

Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible

Concordant Literal Version

All three of these versions translate *Olam* (O.T.) and *aion*, *aionios* (N.T.) either the same way or in a very similar fashion — “age,” “age-during,” “age-abiding,” “eon,” or “eonian.”

Then there is *The Emphatic Diaglott* — a Greek interlinear (N.T.) — translating *aion* and *aionios* as “age” and “age-lasting” in the interlinear part.

Then, in an English side column translation, case forms of *aion* and *aionios* are used in the text, untranslated.

(*The Emphatic Diaglott* was registered by the U.S. Congress in 1864, with work completed during the next several decades on the other three versions mentioned.)

And the preceding type translation work can easily be done when reading any English version. Simply understand all appearances of “eternal” in the English text as “age” or “age-lasting” (from the Hebrew and Greek texts) — referring to “time” during the 7,000 years dealt with by Scripture (during both the present age and the coming age, though mainly during the coming age (during the Lord’s 1,000-year Day).

You will be far more accurate both textually and contextually if you see and understand English translations in the preceding manner.

This is *NOT* to undermine in any way the thought of man's presently possessed salvation being "eternal." Rather, it is simply remaining with the way Scripture handles the matter — making a sharp distinction between two ages in connection with the present earth (Man's 6,000-year Day, and the Lord's 1,000-year Day) and the endless array of ages in connection with the new earth.

Scripture is about the former, NOT the latter. And man, studying Scripture, SHOULD deal with and remain within the confines of the subject matter in Scripture, which deals centrally with man in relation to the coming 1,000-year Lord's Day, NOT in relation to the eternal ages beyond.

Appendix II

Place & Importance of John's Gospel

*MUST Precede, NOT Follow, the Three Synoptic Gospels
The Genesis of the New Testament*

“In the beginning God created the heaven [‘the heavens’] and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

The New Testament begins and continues *EXACTLY* like the Old Testament began and continued, *after the SAME structure and with the SAME subject matter*. And attention can be called to at least two main problems which prevent individuals from seeing and understanding the two Testaments in this manner.

Briefly stated, these two problems are:

1) The place which John's gospel presently occupies in the order of the four gospels.

John's gospel has been placed *FOLLOWING* the three *synoptics*. John's gospel though *should PRECEDE* the three *synoptics*, *NOT ONLY* introducing the three *synoptics* *BUT* the *New Testament as a whole*.

2) *NOT* seeing and understanding that the subject matter, beginning the gospel accounts and continuing throughout the New Testament has been recorded in parallel fashion to that previously seen beginning and continuing in the Old Testament.

Properly seeing and understanding this parallel subject matter correctly can be accomplished *ONLY if John's gospel occupies its proper place in relation to the three synoptics.*

(The first part of this appendix article will deal with the two preceding problems, under separate headings, which will necessitate continual reference to the O.T., particularly to Moses [pp. 176-186a].)

Then, the remainder of this article will deal with the central message in the four gospels, introducing Acts and the epistles, also necessitating continual reference to the O.T., particularly to Moses [pp 186b-194].)

Place Which John's Gospel Occupies

As previously stated, John's gospel is out of place in the arrangement of the New Testament books, *which doesn't help matters at all when picturing and understanding the gospels TOGETHER, as a UNIT.* John should — actually, *John MUST — BEGIN* the New Testament, placed at the beginning of the four gospels, *NOT* placed at the end.

John's gospel parallels Genesis. Both books begin and continue after the same fashion.

Both begin *EXACTLY* the same way, "In the beginning..."; both then continue with a septenary structure set forth in the opening two chapters (*cf.* Gen. 1:1-2:3; John 1:29, 35, 43, 2:1); and both deal with *EXACTLY* the same subject matter throughout — "Genesis" from the standpoint of *types*, and "John" from the standpoint of *signs*, with that foreshadowed by both *ending at EXACTLY the same place, the seventh day, the Messianic Era.*

John's gospel, in the preceding respect, is *the ONLY one* of the four gospels which begins in the correct place in relation to the unchangeable foundation established in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis.

And, *IF* John's gospel is *NOT* placed at the beginning, introducing the gospels and New Testament as a whole (much like Genesis introducing Exodus through Joshua and the Old Testament as a whole), *THEN* the New Testament *CANNOT* possibly be seen beginning and continuing in a completely correct manner, paralleling the Old Testament, continuing the same subject matter.

BUT, note something about this parallel, something inherent within the septenary structure, something completely indispensable.

And this, as the preceding, is *NOT* seen in the synoptics at all. It is seen *ONLY* in *John's gospel*.

John *BEGINS* with that foreshadowed by events occurring on day one in the first chapter of Genesis (having to do with *the FIRST thing* that God does when restoring a ruined creation [vv. 2b-5]).

THEN, John moves on to that foreshadowed by events on days two through six (having to do with God's continued work in the restoration of a ruined creation), with a view to the seventh day (carrying matters to completion, showing that which follows His complete work of restoring a ruined creation [vv. 6-25]).

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapter I, "Genesis and John," in the author's book, *Moses and John*.)

The three synoptics though are quite different. The synoptics pick up *BEYOND* that foreshadowed by events on day one, *BEGINNING* with that foreshadowed by events on days two through six, with a view to the seventh day.

And an individual simply *CANNOT* begin at the point seen in the synoptics. He *MUST* begin with events foreshadowed by God's work on day one, *NOT* with God's subsequent work foreshadowed by events on day two or beyond.

THIS is the central reason WHY John's gospel MUST occupy its proper place in relation to the synoptics and the New Testament as a whole.

IF John's gospel DOESN'T occupy its proper place in the New Testament, the way that the New Testament begins (with one of the synoptics) would be out of line with the unchangeable foundational base set forth beginning Genesis, leaving it out of line NOT ONLY with Genesis BUT the Old Testament as a whole (dealt with in the next section, pp. 186-194).

In other words, *IF* the Gospel of John is *NOT* recognized as the introductory gospel, introducing the other three gospels and the New Testament as a whole, there would be *NO foundational base* for the way that the New Testament begins.

And without this base, the beginning and continuing structure of the New Testament would be *completely out of line* with the beginning and continuing structure previously seen in the Old Testament.

In the preceding respect, with the Gospel of John following the three synoptic gospels *in almost ANY printed edition of Scripture*, and, consequently, *almost NEVER* seen in its correct light in relation to the Old Testament, the other gospels, and the New Testament as a whole, *is it any wonder that conditions have become as they presently exist in Christendom today?*

(John is the Genesis of the N.T. as Genesis is the John of the O.T.)

John's gospel, the one non-synoptic gospel, is different from the other three gospels in numerous ways, and individuals down through the years, *NOT understanding this gospel, have NOT known what to do with it in relation to the other three.*

In past years, New Testaments have been printed at various times with John's gospel different places among the other three gospels, even first, where it belongs. But, somehow, the gospel has ended up where it is today — following the other three rather than preceding them.

This would be somewhat equivalent to placing Genesis somewhere *other than at the beginning*, with Exodus beginning the O.T.

This, of course, wasn't done in the arrangement of the O.T. books, but something very similar *HAS BEEN DONE* in the arrangement of the N.T. books.)

Along with the preceding, moving John to its rightful place at the beginning of the New Testament would allow Acts to follow Luke's gospel. Luke began Acts *EXACTLY* where he left off when finishing his gospel account, and none of the other three gospels provides this same smooth continuance into Acts, though Mark would be similar.

As well, with this proper transition from Luke into Acts, and seeing Acts as somewhat of a fifth gospel (which, in actuality, it is), the New Testament, as the Old Testament, would begin with a Pentateuch, covering the complete account of both the offer and the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel before moving into the epistles.

Then there is another central thing about placing John first, preceding the other three gospels.

Placing John's gospel *first*, with its statement regarding *THE PURPOSE* for "signs" (20:30, 31) would set the stage for the appearance of "signs" in the three subsequent gospels, along with Acts, *allowing the PURPOSE for the manifestation of signs throughout all five books to be properly understood.*

(*NOT* having John's gospel occupying its proper place among the other three gospels and *NOT* recognizing the proper place signs occupy in all four gospels, continuing into Acts, would undoubtedly account, in no small part, for a current widespread, erroneous teaching concerning John's gospel and the synoptics.

Though that taught often takes different forms, some uniformity exists.

It is often taught that the synoptics have to do with the offer of the kingdom to Israel, but John's gospel is seen separate from this offer.

John's gospel, on the basis of the statement in 20:30, 31 [revealing the purpose for the eight recorded "signs" in this gospel] is said to be the one N.T. book written to tell an unsaved person how to be saved.

And with the Jewish people seen as mainly unsaved at the time these signs were being performed, *John's gospel would relate the signs first to the Jewish people, then to unsaved man today, with these signs having to do with a salvation message for both groups [a message pertaining to eternal salvation, NOT salvation in relation to the kingdom, as seen in the synoptics].*

In the light of this whole scenario, had John's gospel been placed first by those arranging the N.T. books, a number of presently existing problems, such as the preceding, may very well have never existed in the first place.

BUT, this would necessitate individuals *correctly understanding particularly two things*:

- 1) The stated purpose for "signs" in John 20:30, 31.
- 2) The saved status of the Jewish people to whom Christ came (*ref. the author's article, "Salvation — Old and New Testaments" and "Salvation Message in the Gospels"*).

But, with John's gospel in the wrong place, coupled with the way Christians think today — seeing only saved or unsaved, heaven or hell issues throughout practically all Scripture, particularly in John's gospel — all of the preceding has been thrown to the winds.

John 20:30, 31 has been made to reference something other than what is plainly stated (resulting in a misunderstanding of the purpose for "signs"); the Jewish people are seen mainly as unsaved at the time Christ came the first time (resulting in the gospel of John being seen as a book

written to tell the unsaved how they can be saved); and the expressions, “the kingdom of the heavens” and “the kingdom of God” in the gospels, have often been made to be synonymous with *heaven* — e.g., “entering the kingdom” seen as synonymous with *going to heaven*.

In short, a book that has been designed to properly introduce the other three gospels and the New Testament as a whole, dealing with the kingdom that had previously been introduced in the opening verses of Genesis, *has been misplaced and misinterpreted, with its purpose all but destroyed.*

And, for the most part, this has been done, NOT by its enemies, BUT by its friends.

The Subject Matter, Beginning with John’s Gospel

With John seen as the Genesis of the New Testament, note the parallel subject matter beginning and continuing in both Genesis and John, something which, as previously stated, *would NOT be true at all in ANY one of the three synoptic gospels.*

John *NOT ONLY* begins the same way Genesis begins (“In the beginning...” and opening with a septenary structure) *BUT* John continues *the SAME way* Genesis continues (with events foreshadowed by those occurring on day one in Genesis, then with events foreshadowed by those on days two through six, with a view to those of the seventh day.

The framework of the preceding is set forth in the opening septenary structure of John, *EXACTLY as it had previously been set forth in the opening septenary structure of Genesis* (cf. Gen. 1:1-2:3; John 1:1-2:11).

ALL things beginning both books are the SAME — the restoration of a ruined kingdom, with man created to rule this kingdom; the restoration of ruined man, with a kingdom in view.

ALL is the SAME!

(Again, the foundational base upon which *ALL* subsequent Scripture *MUST* rest was established at the outset in Genesis, beginning the O.T.. And John's gospel is *the ONLY one* of the gospels which allows this to be properly seen, beginning the N.T.

In this respect, *IF* John's gospel is *NOT* allowed to begin the N.T., and the subject matter of this gospel is *NOT* understood correctly, *THEN* the N.T. *can* *ONLY* be seen beginning and continuing in a manner completely out of line with the O.T. foundation[s].

And for the repercussions of this in Christianity today, one need only look around.)

Genesis, beyond two succinct statements concerning God's creation of the heavens and the earth, with the earth subsequently becoming in a ruined state (1:1, 2a), continues by revealing God's initial work restoring the ruined creation — the Spirit moves, God speaks, light comes into existence... (1:2b-5).

Genesis, at the outset, reveals *God's initial and continuing work of restoration* — *restoring a ruined creation, with a GOAL in view.*

And John's gospel, paralleling Genesis, *does EXACTLY the same thing, beginning at EXACTLY the same place.*

In Genesis, the restoration has to do *with the material creation*; in John, the restoration has to do *with ruined man.*

Genesis references light shining out of darkness, as does John (Gen. 1:2-5; John 1:4-9; *cf.* II Cor. 4:6). Genesis then goes on to explain this in relation to that foreshadowed by God's work on day one (Gen. 3, 4); and John does *EXACTLY* the same thing (1:29, 36).

In Genesis, reference is made to God slaying one or more animals (ch. 3) and to Cain slaying Abel (ch. 4). Death and shed blood are introduced in association with God's initial work when restoring a ruined creation.

In John, *the SAME thing is seen*. Note John the Baptist's statement pertaining to Jesus on two separate occasions in the opening chapter:

“...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And looking [Gk., *emblepo*, ‘intently looking’] upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” (John 1:29b, 36).

(Actually, exactly as death and shed blood are seen in connection with the restoration of the ruined creation in John chapter one [ruined man] it is also [it has to be] seen in connection with the restoration of the ruined creation in Genesis chapter one [the ruined material creation].

In this respect, death and shed blood are *FIRST* seen at this opening part of Scripture [ch. 1], *NOT* at the first mention of what could only have been death and shed blood in chapter three [God clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins, portending a previous death, with shed blood].

For information on the preceding, refer to “Without Shedding of Blood (II)” in the author's article, “Salvation — Old and New Testaments.”)

Then, once the matter has been dealt with in both books (Genesis and John), in line with events foreshadowed by those on day one of Gen. 1, matters in both books move *FROM* events foreshadowed by those on day one *TO* events foreshadowed by those occurring on subsequent days, with a view to events foreshadowed by the seventh day.

This complete sequence *is NOT seen at all in ANY one of the three synoptics*. The septenary structure is seen places in the body of the synoptics (*e.g.*, Matt. 16:28-17:5), but the synoptics are *NEITHER introduced by an “In the beginning” statement NOR a septenary structure*.

NOR, as previously stated, are *ANY* of the three synoptics introduced by events which were foreshadowed by those occurring on day one in Genesis.

ALL three synoptics begin at a point BEYOND that foreshadowed by events on day one. ALL begin and continue with that foreshadowed by God's work on days two and beyond — NOT on day one — with a view to the seventh day.

Salvation (the restoration of the ruined creation) in the synoptics begins with the deliverance of a saved people in relation to the proffered kingdom. *ALL three BEGIN with that foreshadowed by events on day one in Genesis as having ALREADY occurred. And matters move from THAT point, on THAT basis.*

Thus, John's gospel stands *ALONE* with respect to paralleling Genesis in *ALL* respects. *ONLY* by beginning with John's gospel, among the four gospels, can you begin in a proper manner — "*In the beginning*" [*same as Genesis*], *a septenary structure [drawing from the foundation opening Genesis], and salvation by grace [seen in the opening four chapters of Genesis]*.

THEN, John's gospel — *ONCE* the matter surrounding that foreshadowed by events occurring on day one in Gen. 1 has been dealt with — moves beyond these events and begins dealing with *EXACTLY* the same message seen at the beginning of and throughout the synoptics, introducing the synoptics and the New Testament as a whole.

And, understanding the place and structure of John's gospel in this respect, a passage such as John 3:16 *can readily be seen in a correct respect.*

Attention in this verse is called to God's "only begotten Son," a direct reference to *NOT ONLY Christ's Sonship BUT to His Firstborn status (note "Son of man," a Messianic title, vv. 13, 14, introducing v. 16 [cf. Ps. 8:3-9; Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 16:13-17])*.

John 3:16, contextually dealing with the same thing as John 1:29, 36 (3:14, 15), does so *in a REGAL setting*; and though eternal salvation is in view, *the PURPOSE for that salvation is, first and foremost, seen in relation to the kingdom being proclaimed* — moving beyond that foreshadowed by events occurring on day one in Gen. 1, to events foreshadowed by those of the subsequent five days, with that foreshadowed by events of the seventh day in view.

(John 3:16 forms a concluding part of Christ's discourse to Nicodemus, where the subject matter begins through referencing *the coming kingdom*, responding to Nicodemus' question about *the signs being manifested* (vv. 2-5).

"Signs" in Scripture *ALWAYS* have to do with two inseparable things: *Israel, and the kingdom*. *BOTH MUST be present for signs to exist [i.e., God MUST be dealing with Israel in relation to the kingdom]*.

And this overall subject beginning the discourse — signs, the proffered kingdom — continues throughout [vv. 1-21], including vv. 14-16.

[For information on *John 3:16* (set within context) and on *signs in Scripture*, refer to Appendix III in this book, "Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus"].

Then, referencing *God's firstborn Son* in John 3:16, note the opening, introductory verses in the Book of Hebrews.

These verses form the manner in which the Spirit of God arranged seven Messianic quotations [vv. 5-13], introducing *the subject matter in the book*.

The Holy Spirit, when He moved the author of this book to pen the recorded words, arranged these seven Messianic quotations from the O.T. in such a manner that *Christ's Sonship and His Firstborn status as God's Son* [vv. 5, 6] would be brought to the forefront at the beginning, *forming the foundational basis for ALL which follows*.

Salvation is to be effected through God's "only begotten Son,"

His firstborn Son, with a view, first and foremost, to the kingdom.

Understanding John 3:16 ANY other way would be out of line with NOT ONLY the context BUT with the central message of the book.

[The preceding is the primary, contextual interpretation of John 3:16. The verse is almost always used in a respect which *does NOT recognize this regal setting of the verse at all, used simply as a verse relative to eternal salvation to reach the unsaved.*

There is *NOTHING* wrong with using this verse and other similar verses in John's gospel in this respect, for Jesus is the Saviour, regardless of whether salvation in relation to the kingdom or in relation to eternal life is being dealt with.

BUT, a major problem arises when the contextual use of these verses is completely ignored and the verses end up being used as simply *salvation verses for the unsaved ALONE.*

Using the verses *ONLY* in this manner, *the contextual, central reason for one's salvation is NOT seen at all.* And, invariably, the subject matter surrounding salvation becomes heaven-hell issues, *with the true textual issue all but lost.*

Scripture *MUST* be dealt with both textually (*EXACT* wording of the text) and contextually — something almost *NEVER* done when dealing with John's gospel.

And, as a result, Christendom has paid a steep price when it comes to correct Biblical interpretation, *NOT ONLY* in John's gospel *BUT* elsewhere as well!.)

Central Message in the Four Gospels

Since the opening of the New Testament parallels the opening of the Old Testament — in both form and subject matter (as previously seen, evident through comparing

Genesis and John) — properly understanding the New Testament becomes relatively simple, for the form and subject matter have already been established and revealed in the Old Testament.

God, through Moses, originally established and revealed His plans and purposes, introducing the Old Testament; *THEN*, 1,500 years later, God, through John, set forth these *SAME* plans and purposes, introducing the New Testament.

BEGIN where God *BEGAN*, understand how God *BEGAN* and continued in the Old Testament, *THEN* you can understand how God, through His Spirit, *BEGAN* and continued in the New Testament.

And with the preceding in mind, for purposes at hand — to illustrate parallel and continuing subject matter in both Testaments in order to show the subject matter in the synoptics — let's begin in the gospels, *THEN* go back to Genesis in order to show, beyond any possible question, *the EXACT subject matter being introduced*.

And, building on a properly established base, *this SAME subject matter*, beginning in Moses and continuing in John, can easily be shown to carry through the synoptics into Acts, the epistles, then into Revelation.

In the gospels, John the Baptist appears as the forerunner of Christ. And his message to Israel can be seen in Matt. 3:1ff:

“Repent ye; for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...”

This was a call for national repentance on the part of the Jewish people, with a view to a proffered kingdom, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

This was the message which Jesus continued following John's imprisonment (Matt. 4:17ff), the message which He commissioned twelve disciples to proclaim (Matt. 10:1ff), and the message which He later commissioned seventy

additional disciples to proclaim (Luke 10:1ff).

“The kingdom of heaven” [KJV, *et al.*] appears thirty-two times in Matthew’s gospel, and it is peculiar to this gospel, with the possible exception of John 3:5 [some Greek manuscripts have “the kingdom of the heavens” instead of “the kingdom of God” in this verse (Aleph, *et al.*)].

In the Greek text, “heaven” is always plural and articular. Thus, the expression should be correctly translated, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

“The kingdom of God” appears in all four gospels, Acts, and the epistles. And, though this expression could cover a larger scope than the kingdom of the heavens [*i.e.*, cover God’s entire universal kingdom (Ps. 103:19-22)], it is *NOT used this way in the N.T.*

Rather, “the kingdom of God” is used in a more limited respect, covering the same scope as “the kingdom of the heavens” [*cf.* Matt. 19:23, 24 (also Matt. 3:2; 21:43), where both expressions are used in this respect]. “The kingdom of the heavens” [or “the kingdom of God,” as used in the gospels, Acts and epistles] has to do with a segment of God’s universal kingdom — *with this earth and its government, NOT with any part or segment of God’s kingdom beyond this earth.*)

1) Exactly What Kingdom?

But *exactly WHAT* kingdom was John the Baptist referencing when he appeared with the message, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...”?

And, following John, this same message was *proclaimed to Israel for over three years* by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy, *permeating the entirety of ALL things seen throughout the gospel accounts.*

Aside from identifying the kingdom through referencing the name of the kingdom itself — “the kingdom of the heavens” — the answer to the question is actually quite easy to ascertain, clearly revealing the identity of the kingdom

in the process:

WHAT kingdom was in view beginning the Old Testament, referenced as “the earth,” which had been created, then ruined (Gen. 1:1, 2a)?

WHAT kingdom was in view in that part of the septenary structure having to do with the restoration of the ruined kingdom (Gen. 1:2b-25)?

WHAT kingdom was in view when man was created to rule the restored kingdom (Gen. 1:26-28)?

WHAT kingdom was in view when the incumbent ruler (Satan) brought about man’s fall so that man would be disqualified to rule this kingdom?

And, following this down to the gospels, 4,000 years later, *WHAT kingdom* was in view when the second Man, the last Adam, appeared in Satan’s presence for forty days and nights to be tested by the one who had brought about the first man, the first Adam’s fall, showing the incumbent ruler that He, as the second Man, the last Adam, was fully qualified to take the kingdom and rule?

WHAT kingdom was offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel, with a view to *the one new man* “in Christ” being called into existence to bring forth fruit for this kingdom (Matt. 21:18-43; Acts 2:1ff; I Peter 2:9, 10)?

Then, projecting matters out to a time 2,000 years later, still future today, *WHAT kingdom* will Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, take and rule in Rev. 11:15?

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of this world became that of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever” (corrected translation).

Throughout, it is the SAME kingdom seen at the beginning

in Genesis chapter one, a kingdom seen permeating the whole of Scripture!

But, before going back to the expression, “the kingdom of the heavens” in Matthew’s gospel, note a few things about the kingdom seen at the beginning in Genesis, and then 6,000 years later in the Book of Revelation.

This kingdom, “the kingdom of this world” (this earth, a province in God’s universal kingdom) was/is ruled by Satan and his angels (one-third of his original contingent, which followed him in his attempted coup, preceding Adam’s creation, bringing about the ruin of his kingdom).

And Satan and his angels ruled/rule from a heavenly sphere over the earth, over the province, over the kingdom — a restored kingdom today, though under a curse because of Adam’s sin (*cf.* Gen. 3:17, 18; Eph. 1:10-22; 3:9-11; 6:10-18).

The form of this rule prior to man’s creation is unrevealed and unknown; but since man’s creation and subsequent fall, Satan and his angels have ruled through man upon the earth (though this rule has been confined to *the Gentile nations* since the time of Isa. 43:1 [“now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob”], separating Israel, via creation, from the nations [*cf.* Num. 23:9; Deut. 14:2; Dan. 10:11-21]).

(For information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*.)

This present kingdom, “the kingdom of this world,” is the kingdom which God will one day give to His Son:

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:1-4).

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13, 14).

This is the kingdom which Christ will wrest from Satan’s hands upon His return; and, with the Son *THEN* in control of the kingdom, He, with His co-heirs, will ascend the throne (His *OWN* throne, *NOT* David’s throne on earth) and rule over a restored kingdom, a restored earth.

(Christ will have a dual reign, both from His Own throne in the heavens, with His bride alongside, seated on the throne with Him [Rom. 8:16-19; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21], and from David’s throne on earth, in the midst of a restored Jewish nation [cf. Joel 2:21-32; Luke 1:31-33].)

Understanding the preceding information about the kingdom and understanding that the Old and New Testaments have been established in a parallel fashion, note the simplicity of unmistakably understanding *EXACTLY* what is meant by the expression, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

All one has to do to see WHAT kingdom was in view in the gospels is go back to the beginning and see WHAT kingdom was in view in Genesis.

And to verify the identity of this kingdom, note again *the kingdom in view WHEN* the first man, the first Adam, was created and fell and *the kingdom in view WHEN* the second Man, the last Adam, was tempted by Satan 4,000 years later.

And to further reflect on the matter, note again *WHAT kingdom* Christ will one day take, from whence He and His co-heirs will reign.

The message in the gospels, which is carried over into both Acts and the epistles has to do with *a kingdom, introduced in Genesis and realized in the Book of Revelation.*

2) Why Offered to Israel at This Time?

BUT, why was this kingdom offered to Israel at Christ's first coming? After all, Israel was *NOT* going to rule in this kingdom.

That is seen in both Testaments (type, antitype, the Prophets [e.g., Gen. 2, 3, 21-25; Num. 14ff; Isa. 2:1-5; Joel 2, 3; Heb. 3, 4; Rev. 2, 3). Israel is going to rule in the earthly segment of the kingdom, in the kingdom covenanted to David.

The answer, of course, like so many things in Scripture, is quite simple, *IF Scripture is allowed to be its own interpreter.*

Otherwise, the opposite could ONLY be true.

In the Old Testament, *Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob were made the repository for both heavenly and earthly promises and blessings* (Gen. 12:1-3; 14:17-20; 21:16-18; 26:3-5; 28:3, 4).

In this respect, at some point in time, the seed of Abraham was to rule in both spheres of the kingdom; and, in the final analysis, this would require, at some point in time, that the sceptre of "the kingdom of this world" be removed from Satan's hand and be placed in Israel's hand.

THAT is what the central message in the four gospels is about.

It is about an offer of *the kingdom of the heavens* — "the kingdom of this world," under Satan's control — to the seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel, *which had been the repository of the kingdom for two millenniums BUT had yet to come into*

possession of the kingdom, had yet to hold the sceptre.

Israel, prior to this time — from the days of Moses to the days of the Babylonian captivity, some eight hundred years — had been in possession of *an earthly theocracy, the kingdom covenanted to David.*

However, because of continued covenantal disobedience, over centuries of time (the Mosaic covenant, containing the rules and regulations governing the people in the theocracy), *matters pertaining to regality* were taken from Israel's hands and given to the Gentiles, with "the times of the Gentiles" then ensuing, lasting until the present time.

But back to the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, beginning with John, then by Christ, the Twelve, and the Seventy...

The time was "at hand," or "had drawn near." The Messianic King Himself was present, with the offer.

BUT, WHAT did Israel do?

The religious leaders of the nation, mainly the Pharisees, with their Scribes (note Matt. 23:1ff) — the largest of the religious sects, controlling the religious life of the people by their very numbers — fought the Messenger and this message at every turn (often joined by the Sadducees). And this ultimately resulted in *NOT ONLY* the nation rejecting the proffered kingdom *BUT* in the crucifixion of the One making the offer, the King Himself.

(Note something often overlooked about Christ's crucifixion. *Matters throughout are REGAL* [the crown of thorns, the caption placed above His head, pilate's statement ("Behold your King"), the chief priests' response ("We have no king but Caesar")].

Israel crucified their King, though in the process they slew the Lamb.)

And because of Israel's rejection, the kingdom (that facet

of the kingdom which had been offered), as previously seen, was taken from Israel, and a new entity was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (*the one new man* “in Christ” — Abraham’s seed because of their positional standing, “in Christ,” Who is Abraham’s Seed [Gal. 3:26-29; *cf.* Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11]).

(Refer to the author’s book, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles*, where the preceding is developed more fully.)

By way of summation, *DON’T* begin in the gospels. Rather, begin in Genesis in order to find out what the gospels are all about. *THEN*, and *ONLY THEN*, move on into and begin the gospels.

As well, *DON’T* separate John’s gospel from the synoptics. Correctly understand the statement regarding “signs” in John 20:30, 31; and correctly understand *WHY* John’s gospel *MUST* be placed *FIRST*, introducing *NOT ONLY* the three synoptics *BUT* the New Testament as a whole.

Appendix III

Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus

*MUST Be Understood Textually and Contextually
Brought Forth from Above, NOT from Below*

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles [‘signs’] that thou doest except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [‘brought forth from above’], he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit [‘out of water and Spirit’], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again [‘brought forth from above’]...

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:1-7, 14-16).

The gospel of John is built around eight signs, having to do with supernatural manifestations of power, directed to the nation of Israel, pertaining to the proffered kingdom.

These signs were part and parcel with the message being proclaimed.

(Supernatural signs, performed by empowered individuals, are *FIRST* seen in Scripture during Moses' day, associated with his return to Egypt and the deliverance of his people. And this deliverance *was with a view to their being established in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* [Ex. 3:1-10; 4:1-9, 21-23, 29-31; Deut. 6:22, 23].

A first mention principle *pertaining to SIGNS was established at THIS point in Scripture, which can NEVER change*. Any time signs of this nature are seen in Scripture — signs performed by individuals empowered to perform *the signs* — they *ALWAYS have to do with the SAME thing seen when they were introduced. They ALWAYS have to do with ISRAEL and the KINGDOM*.

Accordingly, in the gospel accounts and in Acts they had to do *with the message to ISRAEL pertaining to the proffered KINGDOM* [offered in the gospels, re-offered in Acts, attended by supernatural signs throughout].

The two were inseparably related after such a fashion that *the presence of one would necessitate the presence of the other*.

Or, the converse would be equally true. *The absence of one would necessitate the absence of the other*.

[Note what the preceding *ALONE* will reveal about the purpose statement for the eight signs in John's gospel (20:30, 31).

These SIGNS have to do with ISRAEL in relation to the proffered KINGDOM, NOT with the unsaved and the gospel of grace (an erroneous view held by many)].

For additional information regarding the preceding, refer to the author's article, "Signs, Wonders, Miracles.")

“The kingdom of the heavens” — the rule of the heavens over the earth — was being offered to Israel, preceded by the call for national repentance.

And the *“signs”* were designed to show the Jewish people what they could have *IF the nation would heed the message and repent* — supernatural provision, protection, and blessings as the nation occupied her rightful place at the head of the nations within the theocracy.

And, *IF a person remains SOLELY within Scripture itself, NO question could possibly exist concerning WHAT kingdom was being offered to Israel.*

ALL that has to be done is set events in the first three chapters of Genesis alongside the message being proclaimed in the gospels, the account of Christ’s temptation/testing at the hands of Satan in Matthew chapter four (or, Mark 1 or Luke 4), and carry matters through to Rev. 11:15.

In short, *compare Scripture with Scripture. The SAME kingdom introduced in Genesis is seen in the four gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation* — the kingdom ruled by Satan, “the kingdom of the heavens,” the rule of the heavens over the earth.

The first man, the first Adam, was created to take the scepter in Genesis, but Satan brought about his fall and resulting disqualification.

The second Man, the last Adam, was tested by Satan in Matthew (or Mark, or Luke) to show that he was fully qualified to take the sceptre.

And, as seen in Revelation, Christ will one day take the kingdom, and reign (the kingdom previously introduced in Genesis, which the Father will give to His Son [Dan. 7:13, 14]).

(For more information on the preceding, refer to the foreword and introduction in the author’s book, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles.*

Also see “Exactly What Kingdom?,” Appendix II in this book, pp. 186-188)

The message being proclaimed to Israel, *attended by supernatural SIGNS, had to do with THIS kingdom*. And when Nicodemus came to Jesus in John 3:1ff, the issue *had to do with THESE signs, CHRIST'S identity, and, thus, the proffered kingdom*.

Nicodemus acknowledged that he and other Jewish religious leaders *KNEW Christ's identity* — “we know...” (v. 2). They *KNEW EXACTLY* Who He was. They *KNEW* that He was the “heir” of the vineyard — which is *WHY* they killed Him.

They, *KNOWING His identity*, were *NOT* going to “have this man to reign” over them (Matt. 21:38; Luke 19:14).

And Jesus, knowing the preceding, dealt with Nicodemus statement in a direct manner, succinctly providing a wealth of information *which Nicodemus SHOULD have known and understood, BUT DIDN'T* (cf. vv. 4, 9-12).

Christ began His response with one central subject in relation to the proffered kingdom — *the necessity of being brought forth from above* (vv. 3-8).

(For information on this subject, refer to the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*.)

And Christ dealt with this subject by evidently alluding to one central sequence of events and then referencing a subsequent event, both in Jewish history.

First, Christ evidently alluded to events surrounding the Red Sea passage under Moses and the position of the Israelites beyond (vv. 3, 5; cf. Ex. 14:21-15:21 [“evidently alluded to” *because NO other sequence of events in Jewish history would contextually and completely fit Christ's statement* (vv. 3, 5) *like this one*]); and then, later in the discourse, *Christ referenced a subsequent event in this same sequence* — Moses lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness (vv. 14-18; cf. Num. 21:5-9]).

To illustrate the central subject — *brought forth from above* — Christ began and continued with events *BEYOND* the death of the firstborn in Exodus chapter twelve.

And all of the preceding could be further illustrated (actually, “initially” illustrated) by going back to the basic foundational type in Genesis chapter one and seeing that Christ dealt with corresponding events to those occurring on days two and three, *FOLLOWING* events occurring on day one.

Christ, drawing from Jewish history, dealt with *events occurring BEYOND the death of the firstborn in Exodus chapter twelve*, seen in verses three through five, then seen from a different perspective in verses fourteen through seventeen.

(The preceding is developed in the next two parts of this appendix article: “John 3:3-5” and “John 3:14-17.”)

In short, the subject matter at hand throughout Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus *is in complete keeping with the subject matter at hand throughout the gospels* (along with the types which He both alluded to and referenced), which has to do with the theocracy in the types, with the proffered kingdom in the gospels, attended by supernatural signs both places.

ALL is about the SAME subject, the SAME goal.

ALL is about the SAME thing found beyond events on day one in Genesis chapter one, beyond the death of the firstborn in Exodus chapter twelve, and throughout the central message seen in the four gospels and beyond.

And ALL moves toward EXACTLY the SAME goal which EVERYTHING moves in Scripture — originally set forth in Genesis, reiterated after a different fashion in Exodus, set forth again in the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and realized in Revelation.

Events in Genesis move toward a seventh day, foreshadowing the earth’s coming Sabbath, when the Messianic Era will be ushered in, when the Son, with His co-heirs, will be in possession of the kingdom and will rule and reign.

Events in Exodus move toward an awaiting inheritance, to be realized through a theocracy to be established in the

land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *the earthly* aspect of the theocracy.

The kingdom in John chapter three though (vv. 3, 5) has to do with the proffered kingdom seen throughout the gospels and in Acts, the other aspect of the kingdom, *the heavenly*.

And this is the kingdom in Revelation which will one day be ruled by Christ and His co-heirs.

It was *ALL* set forth at the beginning, in the opening thirty four verses of Genesis, relating what Scripture is all about, with the end seen from the beginning.

The remainder of Scripture is simply commentary, providing all the sinews, flesh, and skin to cloth the skeletal framework set forth at the beginning (*cf.* Ezek. 37:1ff).

(Note again that Christ came *to a saved generation of Jews*, proclaiming, *NOT* a message pertaining to salvation by grace, *BUT*, a message pertaining *to a KINGDOM* first mentioned 4,000 years earlier and numerous times beyond [centrally via types; *e.g.*, I, II Samuel, Daniel, Jonah].

Had these Jews been unsaved, *NO* message of this nature could possibly have been forthcoming. Spiritual values, particularly of the nature seen here, are simply *NOT* proclaimed to a people who are spiritually dead.

Had the Jewish people been unsaved — spiritually dead — John the Baptist, Christ, the Twelve, and later the Seventy would have had to deal with them relative to this matter *FIRST*.

THEN and ONLY THEN could the message pertaining to the kingdom have been proclaimed.

BUT, the message throughout the gospels and Acts *BEGAN* and *CONTINUED* with an offer of the kingdom of the heavens, contingent on national repentance [Matt. 3:1ff].

Salvation by grace *is simply NOT* seen in *THIS* message.

For more information on the preceding, refer to Chapter IV, "The Israelites at the Time of Christ's First Coming, Saved or Unsaved?," in the author's book, *The Acts Period*.)

John 3:3-5

The expression, “born from above,” or, *brought forth from above*, is introduced in John’s gospel in chapter one (vv. 11-13) and then further dealt with in chapter three as Jesus opened His conversation with Nicodemus (vv. 3-8).

(Again, refer to the author’s book, *Brought Forth from Above*.)

The expression *is NOT* found elsewhere in John’s gospel; *NOR* is it found in the three synoptics, *NOR* in Acts.

And, the expression is found *in ONLY* three epistles elsewhere in the New Testament.

It is found once in James (1:18), twice in I Peter (1:3, 23), and ten times in I John (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1 [three times], 4, 18 [twice]).

The thought of being brought forth from above is introduced in the foundational type at the beginning of Genesis, then seen elsewhere in Genesis and in numerous parts of the Old Testament (*e.g.*, events beginning immediately following the death of the firstborn in Exodus chapter twelve [one complete, overall type, made up of many individual types, extending from that point in Exodus through Joshua]).

And Nicodemus, a leading teacher among the Jews (a teacher of the O.T. Scriptures), should have been quite familiar *with ALL of these things*, allowing him to understand Christ’s statement in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures.

BUT, Nicodemus failed to make the proper association, accounting for Christ’s sharp rebuke (vv. 9-12).

Then, though this expression, *brought forth from above*, is found in only four New Testament books, *the thought* being set forth by the expression, as in the Old Testament — *a saved person being brought forth from above rather than*

from below (cf. Matt. 16:15-17, 21-23; John 8:31-44) — can be found throughout the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation.

(The preceding, of course, is *NOT at all in keeping with the way that this expression has been used in Christendom over the years — in relation to the unsaved and the gospel of grace, NOT in relation to the saved and the continuing aspect of salvation.*

[Those dealing with this expression *in relation to the unsaved invariably relate matters to eternal verities (the possession or nonpossession of eternal life).*

Scripture though deals with the expression *in relation to saved individuals and the proffered kingdom — Jews in John’s gospel, Christians in the three epistles where the expression is found.*

(To understand distinctions between “time” [the coming age, during which the proffered kingdom will be realized] and “eternal” verities [the endless ages beyond, during which the kingdom will continue, though following vast changes], refer to Appendix I in this book, “Biblical Subject and Structure”).

Thus, the expression, *brought forth from above*, dealt with in John’s gospel relative to *the Jewish people* to which Christ came [1:11-13, 3:1ff], *had to do SOLELY with actions of the Jewish people in relation to a kingdom being offered to the nation.*

Again, had the recipients of this message NOT already been saved, there could have been NO offer of the kingdom. Spiritual values are for individuals capable of spiritual perception.

And EXACTLY the same thing can be seen relative to Christians in the three epistles where the expression is found — EXACTLY the SAME thought on the necessity of being brought forth from above [rather than from below] and the SAME kingdom [previously taken from Israel (Matt. 21:43)] NOW being offered to Christians.

[Note particularly I John in this respect, where the expression, *brought forth from above*, is used ten times in a short, five-chapter book written to Christians about fellowship with the Father and His Son, keeping oneself clean through confession of sins, abiding in Christ, etc.

Ten references to salvation by grace would NOT ONLY be COMPLETELY out of place with the subject matter in I John BUT note what viewing a bringing forth from above in this erroneous manner does to the central message in this epistle.

Viewing the preceding in the light of the opening thirty-four verses in Genesis, ONCE BEYOND that foreshadowed by events on day one, an individual is to LOOK AHEAD to that foreshadowed by events on the succeeding five days, with a view to that foreshadowed by events on the seventh day.

And the person, as he traverses that foreshadowed by events on days two through six, is NOT to continually be looking back to that foreshadowed by events on day one, which, *looking at the ten references to being brought forth from above in I John as referencing salvation by grace and the unsaved, he WOULD be DOING.*

And the same thing could be said for the use of this expression in the three other N.T. books where it is found.

I John was used to illustrate the point because of the numerous times that the expression appears, the length of the book, and the plainly revealed subject matter of the book.

The Spirit used this expression ten times in a short book written to Christians, in a book having to do, in its entirety, *with things BEYOND those foreshadowed by events on day one in Genesis one*].

Using the expression in relation to the unsaved and the gospel of grace is NOT ONLY out of line with both the text and context at any place where the expression is found BUT an erroneous teaching of this nature — completely changing the contextual usage of this expression — destroys that which actually is in view.

In the preceding respect, in actuality, any knowledgeable Christian misunderstanding and misusing this expression might want to consider how Christ's words in John 3:10 might very well apply in their lives.)

And, with these things in mind, note in John 3:3, 5 that the introduced statement (actually, continued from ch. 1) pertaining to *the necessity of being brought forth from above, as it relates to the kingdom*, is explained by and inseparably connected with a bringing forth "out of Water and Spirit" in verse five (literal rendering from the Gk. Text).

The subject (a bringing forth from above) is raised and associated with the kingdom in verse three, and then the matter, continuing to be associated with the kingdom, is explained in verse five.

"...Except a man be born again ['brought forth from above'], he cannot see the kingdom of God."

...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit ['out of water and Spirit'], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (vv. 3b, 5b).

The way "water" and "Spirit" appear in the structure of the Greek text in verse five — two nouns connected by a copulative (*kai*, "and") and governed by a single preposition preceding the first noun (*ek*, "out of") — requires that both nouns be understood the same way, either in a figurative sense or in a literal sense.

Individuals attempting to explain how this verse deals with eternal salvation often ignore the requirements of the Greek construction, making one noun literal, the other figurative (*e.g.*, one such misuse of the Greek text is the translation proposed by some, "out of water, even Spirit," making the first noun figurative, the second literal).

But, time need not be spent on a misunderstanding of the subject and structure of the text, for the text *DOESN'T*

deal with eternal salvation.

The very wording of the text and context, having to do *with signs and the proffered kingdom, would, ALONE*, show that something is wrong when attempting to read eternal salvation into the thought of being brought forth from above, particularly when a leading teacher among the Jews was being addressed.

With the preceding in view, let's look at the typology of the matter in Genesis, then in Exodus. And the matter should then become clear, for types have been given to help explain the antitype.

God, *in His sovereign control of ALL things*, brought matters to pass through using both events and experiences of the Old Testament saints, both brought to pass after a fashion that they would form types, which He could later use to draw from to teach His people great spiritual truths.

Matters begin this way in the opening verses of Genesis and continue this way throughout the first 2,000 years of human history (Gen. 1-11a), then throughout the history of Abraham and his descendants through Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons (Gen. 11b ff).

1) Genesis 1:6-13

Genesis opens with a very succinct statement, completely apart from any details whatsoever, regarding *the creation of the heavens, the earth, and the ruin of the earth* (Gen. 1:1, 2a).

It was only later that a few details were given (again, succinctly), allowing man to understand enough about what had occurred during the preceding age or ages that he could somewhat piece matters together. And this, in turn, would allow him to better understand God's plans and purposes for man.

Question: Why didn't God provide more information than has been given about the pre-Adamic history of the earth?

And that is a simple question to answer.

More information *has NOT* been provided because Scripture *is NOT* about events during time preceding the restoration of the earth and man's creation.

Scripture is about man and the earth following that which began to occur in Gen. 1:2b, beginning *NOT ONLY* the restoration of the earth *BUT* revealed events occurring during 7,000 years of time.

And *IF* one moves to the end of the 7,000 years, searching the Scriptures for events beyond this septenary structure of years, he will find little more (*e.g.*, the succinct nature of Rev. 21, 22) than he found about events preceding the 7,000 years.

Only enough is revealed about conditions and events beyond the 7,000 years to allow man to somewhat see and understand where things are headed beyond both Man's 6,000-year Day and the subsequent Lord's 1,000-year Day.

Scripture deals with events during "time," during 7,000 years of "time," *NOT with "time" EITHER preceding the restoration of the earth and man's creation OR with "time" following the Lord's Day, "time" during the endless ages beyond.*

That would evidently be one reason that *NEITHER* the Hebrew text of the Old Testament *NOR* the Greek text of the New Testament has a word for "eternal." Aside from brief references, or the two chapters ending Scripture (Rev. 21, 22), Scripture simply *DOESN'T* deal with the eternal ages. Scripture deals with "time," 7,000 years of time.

And the complete "time" dealt with in Scripture, showing what ALL subsequent Scripture is about — the 7,000 years — is set forth in an established, unchangeable manner in the opening thirty four verses, showing the end from the beginning.

(For information on the preceding, again refer to Appendix I in this book, "Biblical Subject and Structure.")

Man's creation, ruin, and the way that he is to be restored

was set forth, unchangeably established, before man was even created. And this was done through the creation, ruin, and the way that the earth was restored.

God used six days for the restoration of the earth, and He is using six days as well, with each day 1,000 years in length, for man's restoration.

And the whole of the matter is with a view to the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period.

God restored the earth in a perfect, unchangeable manner; and the restoration of any subsequent ruined creation would, *of necessity*, have to follow the original pattern — *the pattern which God uses, which CANNOT be improved upon, for it was set PERFECT at the beginning.*

With that in mind, note events on day one as they would apply to man, *as God begins a work restoring ruined man, wherein, EXACTLY as the ruined earth, a complete ruin and total darkness existed.*

The Spirit of God moved, God spoke, light came into existence, and a division was then made between the light and the darkness.

THIS, as then, remaining today, was/is the initial work which God performed/performs to effect the restoration of the ruined creation (the earth then, man today).

This is where light shines out of darkness, man passes from death unto life.

NOW, events foreshadowed by God's restorative work on day two, followed by day three, can begin. And it is the events of these two days that relate to and parallel that which Jesus evidently referenced opening His conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:3-5.

In Genesis, events on day two had to do with God taking part of the waters covering the earth wherein light *NOW* existed and placing these waters above the atmosphere, leaving two bodies of water, one above, the other below.

On day one, light had been called into existence, and God divided between the light and the darkness.

In relation to man, now possessing spiritual life, a distinction is made between the state of his spirit and his soul.

Then, on day two, there is a division which corresponds to these two parts of man, along with Jesus' initial statement to Nicodemus (vv. 3, 5a), along with what will be seen occurring on day three.

The spiritual nature, with life now restored, associated with light, is connected with that which is above. *The soul-like nature*, having to do with the natural, remains in the sphere of darkness and has to do with that which is below.

The picture at the end of day two has to do with the earth still completely covered with water, with part of the original supply placed above the atmosphere (furnishing the waters above, which over sixteen centuries later fell back to the earth at the time of the Noachian Flood, providing part of the waters which flooded the earth).

Then, on day three, God *could ONLY* have begun to raise and lower different land masses (Ps. 104:5-9, ASV), *EXACTLY* as He later did at the end of the Noachian Flood (with water again covering the complete earth).

And, *EXACTLY* as later occurred during Noah's day, land masses rose up out of the water, with the water running into and settling in basins provided by the lowering of other land masses.

(Note that this part of the restoration of the earth would have had to occur after the same manner both times, for a pattern was set in Genesis one which *could ONLY* have been followed in Genesis eight [for it had been set *perfect* in Gen. 1].)

Then, following the appearance of land masses, vegetation began to appear. These land masses raised up out of the waters on the third day (the day connected with *resurrection*

in Scripture) began to bring forth.

And the vegetation brought forth would progressively grow upward toward the light and the waters above, *NOT* downward toward the darkness and waters below, toward a darkened, watery grave.

And *ALL* of this can be seen in Jesus' words to Nicodemus, seen more from the perspective of events occurring some fifteen centuries prior to Christ's words and some twenty-five centuries before that, seen on day three in Gen. 1:9-13, events resting on the foundation unchangeably established at the beginning in Genesis.

2) *Exodus 12:8-11, 14-17; 14:21-15:21*

As previously stated, and as will be shown, the typology involved in John 3:3-5 deals with that foreshadowed by events in both days two and three in Genesis chapter one.

BUT, the text from John's gospel, particularly verse five, evidently deals more specifically with a companion type — that foreshadowed by the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and their experiences beyond in Exodus chapters fourteen and fifteen.

Again though, this companion type — the experiences of the Israelites under Moses — would rest upon and be in complete conformity to the foundational type in Genesis (as would any other type in relation to the foundational type).

In this respect, note particularly I Cor. 9:24-10:11:

“...*ALL* our fathers were under the cloud, and *ALL* passed through the sea;

And were *ALL* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (10:1b, 2).

a) *Out of Water*

Born, brought forth, out of water from John 3:5, drawing from the type beginning in Exodus chapter fourteen, would

have to do with the Red Sea passage *FOLLOWING the Passover*.

The Israelites (who had experienced the death of the firstborn) were taken down into the Sea, symbolizing *burial following death* (taken down into the place of death) and raised up out of the Sea, symbolizing *resurrection* (raised up out of the place of death [removed from both the sea and Egypt]) and placed on the eastern banks of the Sea (Ex. 12-15).

They stood on the eastern banks of the Sea through *supernatural means, wherein resurrection power was exhibited*. And they stood in this position *with a view to an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

The Israelites, passing through the Sea, *had gone down into the place of death. ONLY the dead are to be buried, and the death of the firstborn had just occurred*.

Thus, *a burial MUST also occur*. But beyond burial, with a vicarious death of the firstborn having occurred, *there MUST also be a resurrection*.

The Israelites, following the death of the firstborn, possessed spiritual life. Thus, they *had to be raised* from the place of death *to walk "in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:4) — something having to do with *the spiritual man ALONE*, for this resurrection *had NOTHING to do with the man of flesh. He was to be LEFT in the place of death*.

(Note how this was originally seen through the events of day three in God's work *restoring the ruined earth* in Gen. 1:9-13, foreshadowing His subsequent work *restoring ruined man*.

The UNCHANGEABLE pattern was SET in Genesis.)

This is pictured during the present dispensation through the act of baptism. A person (a Christian), having experienced the death of the firstborn *vicariously (through the shed blood of the Paschal Lamb, Who died in his stead)*, is placed down in the waters. He then, within the symbolism involved, finds himself *in the place of death, beneath the waters*.

BUT, because the One providing the vicarious death conquered death, the Christian can be removed from the waters and find himself in the position of *having been raised with Christ* (Col. 2:12; 3:1ff).

And in this position — wrought through *supernatural, resurrection power* — the Christian is *to walk* “in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), with a view *to an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy*.

It is going down into the place of death because of the death of the firstborn; and it is rising from this place, as Christ was raised, because *the person NOW possesses spiritual life*.

And this rising has to do *with the spiritual man ALONE*, for, again, *this resurrection has NOTHING to do with the man of flesh. He is to be LEFT in the place of death*.

(The Israelites under Moses in the type could walk out on the eastern banks of the Sea, in resurrection power, because of the totality of that seen in the previous death of the paschal lambs — *resurrection following a vicarious death*.)

BUT, the pursuing Egyptian Pharaoh and his army were left beneath the waters of the Sea, *for there had been NO previous vicarious death of the firstborn*.

THEN, the antitype of either today — *those who HAVE and those who HAVE NOT experienced a vicarious death of the firstborn — is clear, allowing the complete matter to be quite readily seen and understood.*)

Note John 3:5 again: “out of water.”

Now, the continuing part of the text: “and Spirit.”

b) *Out of Spirit*

In John 3:5, Christ *NOT ONLY* referred to a *birth (a bringing forth) out of water* in the preceding respect, *BUT* He also referred to a *birth (a bringing forth) out of Spirit* as well.

In the type, this is seen both before and following the

Red Sea passage, along with the eating of the slain paschal lamb immediately following the death of the firstborn.

The eating of the lamb and subsequently being supernaturally led to the western banks of the Red Sea *could ONLY have to do with the beginning of the thought of being brought forth from above in John 3:3ff (cf. Ex. 12:8 ff).*

The typology of John 3:5 though, relative to “and Spirit,” has to do with the Israelites *AFTER* the Red Sea passage (“out of water and Spirit,” *in THAT order*). They stood in resurrection power on the eastern banks of the Sea, being led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, as they moved toward *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

And the antitype, relative to man today, is evident.

Immediately following the death of the firstborn (through belief on the slain Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ) there is to be a partaking of the Lamb and a following of the Spirit (John 6:30-58).

THEN, as the Christian moves toward the awaiting inheritance (heavenly), that foreshadowed by the Red Sea passage is the first order of obedience and faithfulness, which, *EXACTLY* as in the type, has to do with the burial of the old man, *with the new man ALONE raised to walk in newness of life.*

And a Christian, *raised from the waters* to walk “in newness of life,” has the indwelling Spirit to lead him into all truth, as he moves toward *an inheritance in another land, within a theocracy.*

There MUST be a resurrection in view. THEN, the one raised from the place of death *MUST follow the man of spirit*, allowing the Spirit to fill and lead him throughout his pilgrim journey (cf. Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16).

And the entire matter rests upon that initially seen and set forth *in an unchangeable fashion in Gen. 1:2b-25* — the ruined creation removed from its watery grave and com-

pletely restored over six days time by means of a work of the Spirit throughout.

This is why both “water” and “Spirit” are set forth side-by-side in John 3:5; and this is why the epistles, drawing from the types, go to such great lengths to call all the various facets of this matter to a Christian’s attention.

ONLY through this dual means can a Christian be successfully led to the goal of his calling. ONLY through this dual means can a Christian realize the awaiting inheritance in the kingdom of God.

(From the preceding, note how much is *NOT ONLY* missed *BUT* completely done away with through efforts to deal with the gospel of grace and eternal salvation in John 3:3-5.

Also note how much is missed *IF* an individual attempts to deal with these passages apart from the way God has structured much of the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament, which is highly typical.

IF a person is going to deal with salvation by grace, he needs to reference passages that deal with the subject [*e.g.*, events on day one in Gen. 1, or the death of the firstborn in Ex. 12], *NOT* to events beyond, or references to these events.

And, he needs to deal with the subject in line with the way God, through His Spirit, has structured His Word.)

John 3:14-17

John 3:16 is a mainstay for individuals dealing with the unsaved. And this is all good and well, for the subject matter and resulting resonance of the verse would necessitate such a usage, though a problem would exist in the way that this is too often carried out (referencing heaven, Hell, and eternal verities rather than that seen in the text and context).

Then, on the other side of the issue, John 3:16 can also be seen as a mainstay for individuals dealing with the saved, as Jesus was doing in His conversation with Nicodemus.

(Actually, as in the first part of this discourse, dealing with events surrounding the Red Sea passage and beyond [or events occurring on days two and three in Genesis 1], Nicodemus should have been familiar with that about to occur, referenced in John 3:14, 16.

After all, this was a major subject of O.T. prophecy, and he was a leading teacher among the Jews [*e.g.*, Gen. 4, 22, 37, Isa. 53; *cf.* John 11:49-52].

Accordingly, the primary interpretation of this latter part of the discourse, in keeping with the subject at hand, is *NOT*, it *CANNOT* be, understood as it is almost universally dealt with. Rather, the primary interpretation *MUST* be in keeping with that seen at the beginning of this discourse.

The complete discourse is a connected unit, dealing, from different perspectives, with EXACTLY the SAME thing throughout.)

As will be shown, both the wording and contextual setting of John 3:16 are *MESSIANIC*, in *EXACT* keeping with the way Christ *BEGAN* His discourse with Nicodemus.

And there was *NO* change in the subject matter in the latter part of this discourse, though there is an expansion of the subject. The complete discourse continues into verse sixteen and beyond *EXACTLY* as it began.

John 3:16 has to do with the events surrounding Calvary. *BUT*, something which often goes unrecognized, along with the exact wording and contextual setting of the verse, is the *dual nature* of the preaching of the cross.

In Scripture, there is a preaching of the cross *to the unsaved* (*dealing with salvation by grace*), and there is a preaching of the cross *to the saved* (*dealing with the continuing aspect of salvation*). And the latter is dealt with *FAR* more extensively in Scripture than the former.

Salvation by grace through faith, having to do with the preaching of the cross to the unsaved, as seen for example in Eph. 2:8, 9, is *NOT* the main message of Scripture:

“For by grace are ye saved [*lit.*, ‘you have been saved’] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (vv. 8, 9).

Rather, the main message of Scripture is seen *in what salvation by grace through faith allows and where it takes an individual.*

Salvation by grace through faith, as seen in Eph. 2:8, 9 — a passing “from death unto life” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) — *takes an individual to that seen in Eph. 2:10, which is another way of expressing the preaching of the cross to the saved:*

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (v. 10).

No single book in Scripture deals principally with salvation by grace through faith, *NOT* John’s gospel (as taught by many), *NOT* any of the Pauline epistles, Hebrews, the general epistles, *OR* any other book in Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.

Again, salvation by grace through faith, though usually dealt with extensively by man, *is simply NOT the main message of Scripture.*

(For information on the preceding, refer to the author’s article, “The Preaching of the Cross.”)

John 3:14-17, as clearly stated in the text, draws from an experience of the Israelites under Moses, seen in Num. 21:5-9.

The Israelites, dissatisfied with existing conditions in the wilderness, spoke out against Moses’ leadership, which was, as well — as seen in the text — speaking foremost against the Lord Who had placed Moses in this position.

Because of this, the Lord sent poisonous serpents throughout the camp, and many Israelites died.

The people then repented, changed their minds regarding their past actions, and cried out to Moses.

Moses laid the matter out before the Lord. And the Lord told him to fashion a brazen serpent, raise it on a pole, and all who had been bitten by serpents *need ONLY look at the raised brazen serpent to be healed.*

Numerous spiritual lessons can be drawn from this account.

In the type, serpents, resulting from sin, wrought *death*. *THEN*, the matter could be reversed, with *life* effected, through a brazen serpent (*brass speaks of "judgment"*) raised on a pole; and *ALL an Israelite bitten by one of the serpents had to do was LOOK, and he would live.*

In the antitype, though a serpent in Eden brought about man's fall, it was man's sin which resulted *in death*. Thus, in man's case, a Man *MUST* be raised up to effect *life* (John 8:28; cf. John 2:19-22); and, *EXACTLY* as in the type, *ALL anyone has to do is LOOK, and he will live.*

As previously stated, these verses in John's gospel, particularly verse sixteen, are perhaps the most widely used verses in Scripture by individuals working among the unsaved, dealing with the events foreshadowed by God's restorative work on day one in Genesis chapter one (whether they know it or not, most don't). And these verses, along with other related verses in John's gospel can be so used in this respect.

BUT...

And the "*BUT*" has to do with *HOW* these verses are too often used, ignoring the textual setting.

These verses are part of Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, which has to do with *signs and the proffered kingdom*. And this part of the discourse, as the previous part of the discourse, *draws from events occurring beyond the death of the firstborn, in the wilderness.*

And, in this instance, unlike back in verses three through five, *ALL events are beyond the Red Sea passage.*

And remaining with the primary interpretation, the matter can be seen from three respects — historical, present, and prophetic.

That is, *THIS* account can be seen and dealt with from the perspective of the message pertaining to signs, the Israelites, and the proclamation of the kingdom *at the time of this discourse, preceding the events of Calvary.*

THEN, THIS account can be seen and dealt with from the perspective of the proclamation of the kingdom during the Acts period, extending from there into the present time.

AND, THIS account can be seen and dealt with *relative to NOT ONLY God's firstborn son, Jesus, BUT ALSO God's firstborn son, Israel, showing that which awaits BOTH Sons yet future.*

1) *The Gospel Accounts, Preceding Calvary*

FIRST, note the context leading into the sixteenth verse, then the exact wording of the verse itself.

The expression, “the Son of man,” is used in both verses thirteen and fourteen, *which is a Messianic title* taken from Ps. 8:4-6 and Dan. 7:13, 14.

There are over eighty appearances of this expression in the gospel accounts, used by Christ relative to Himself and the message being proclaimed.

Beyond the gospel accounts the expression is found only four places in the New Testament (Acts 7:58; Heb. 2:6 [a quotation from Ps. 8:4], and Rev. 1:13; 14:14).

Then note in John 3:14 that it is “the Son of man” Who is to be lifted up, crucified, *NOT the paschal Lamb.*

The paschal lamb was given to Israel, and it was given to Israel *to be slain* (Ex. 12:1ff). Had the Jewish people slain Jesus as the paschal Lamb rather than as “the Son of man,” *NO words of condemnation could possibly have been leveled against them* (Acts 2:22, 23, 35, 36; 7:51, 52), for they would have done that which they were supposed to do.

And the Old Testament had made it quite clear that *the nation's paschal Lamb was to be a Man* (Gen. 4, 22; Isa. 53).

BUT, they crucified their "King," "the Son of man," though, in the process, they ALSO slew "the Lamb" (cf. John 11:47-52).

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to Chapter VI, "Commanded to Slay the Lamb, Strike the Rock; *BUT* when they did!," in the author's book, *The Acts Period.*)

Further, in connection with the preceding, note the identity of the One Whom God gave in John 3:16 — "His only begotten Son."

"Sonship" implies *rulership*. *ONLY "Sons" can rule in God's kingdom, whether angels or man.*

All *angels* are "sons" because of creation; *Adam* was God's "son" because of creation (Luke 3:38), created to rule and reign (Gen. 1:26-28).

Israel was God's son because of creation, then God's firstborn because of adoption (Ex. 4:22, 23; Isa. 43:1; Rom. 9:4).

And *Christians* — brought into existence to be the recipient, as a collective entity (Christ's bride), of that which *Israel* rejected at Christ's first coming, the heavenly aspect of the kingdom — are presently "sons" because of creation (II Cor. 5:17), awaiting the adoption into a firstborn status (Rom. 8:23).

The coming kingdom, after Christ returns and takes the kingdom, will be ruled by three firstborn Sons — One begotten, and two adopted.

And the introduction of God's "only begotten Son" (v. 16) by references to Him as "the Son of man" (vv. 13, 14) *simply continues the REGAL thought begun back in verse two of this discourse.*

Note essentially the same identifying statements in Christ's question and Peter's response in Matt. 16:13b, 15b, 16b:

“...Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

“...But whom say ye that I am?”

“...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (vv. 14b, 15b, 16b)

Then, note essentially the same thing seen in Matt. 16:16 and John 3:16 in the stated purpose for signs in John 20:30, 31:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

ALL of this had to do, first and foremost, with the message being proclaimed, *with Israel and the proffered kingdom* [with “life” in relation to this kingdom], *NOT* with the message of salvation by grace through faith. Though, as previously stated, and as will be shown, John 3:14-17 lends itself to the proclamation of this message as well.

THEN, continuing, note how this is all set forth in the post-Calvary aspect of these verses in John’s gospel:

2) *The Acts Period and Beyond, Following Calvary*

Jesus’ discourse with Nicodemus occurred during the offer of the kingdom to Israel (30-33 A.D.), climaxed by events leading into the crucifixion.

Then, following Christ’s resurrection, forty-day ministry, ascension, and the Church being brought into existence, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, lasting for about the next twenty-nine years (33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.), beginning in Acts 2:4 and ending in Acts 28:28.

(Only the bare facts, as seen in the two previous paragraphs, will be given and dealt with in this part of this appendix article.)

For a full discussion of the proffered kingdom as it relates to Israel in the gospels and Acts, and to the Church in Acts and the epistles, refer to the author's books, *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, The Acts Period, and From Acts to the Epistles.*)

During the offer of the kingdom in the gospel accounts, the message was proclaimed *ONLY to the Jew* (Matt. 10:1-8; 15:21-28).

During the re-offer of the kingdom in the Book of Acts, begun at the time that the Church was brought into existence (Acts 2:1ff), *the Gentile was NOW ALSO in view* (but, an "offer" of the kingdom, not a "re-offer" [Acts 1:8]), though *the Jew still held priority* relative to the proffered kingdom throughout the time of the re-offer — "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10).

The Gentile, unlike the Jew during this period, was unsaved and would first have to be reached with the simple salvation message, the gospel of grace. *ONLY THEN* could the message that was "also to the Greek," a message pertaining to the kingdom, come into view (*cf.* I Cor. 2:1, 2; 15:3ff).

Beyond the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel though (beyond about 62 A.D.), extending into modern times, the message pertaining to the kingdom *was/is SOLELY to the one new man "in Christ," made up of saved Jews and saved Gentiles.*

And, throughout this time, that seen in John 3:16, for both Jew and Gentile, would, of necessity, begin with the same, simple message pertaining to the gospel of grace.

Thus, beginning with the Acts period, when the message was carried beyond Israel to the Gentiles, until the present time, there has been a dual preaching of the cross — one to the unsaved, then continuing with the saved.

And it matters not which aspect is in view, *the kingdom* — to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period set forth in Gen. 2:1-3 — *MUST be seen and understood*

as the GOAL in order for John 3:14-17 to be seen and dealt with in its correct Biblical perspective.

That is to say, man has been saved *for a revealed PURPOSE*, having to do with an inheritance in the proffered kingdom. And this has to do with occupying a position as co-heir with Christ after He returns and takes the kingdom.

And *to NOT* deal with the “purpose” for man’s salvation — whether dealing with the simple gospel of grace or the on-going salvation message — *is to deal with the subject apart from that set forth in John 3:14-17.*

(Again, refer to Appendix I in this book, “Biblical Subject and Structure.”)

THEN, note that which lies in the future regarding the matter:

3) *God’s Firstborn Sons, Yet Future*

For the prophetic aspect of John 3:14-17, note two types — the type in Num. 21:5-9, referenced in verse fourteen, and the typology surrounding Paul’s conversion as he was confronted by the risen Christ while traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus (Acts 9:3ff; I Cor. 15:8; I Tim. 1:12-16).

a) *The Type in Numbers*

The type in Numbers, from which John 3:16 draws, succinctly provides the complete history of Israel.

In verse five, there is sin, disobedience in the camp, showing Israel’s past condition, continuing into the present.

In verse six, God reacts by sending poisonous serpents throughout the camp, showing God’s displeasure with His people’s sin, disobedience.

Beyond this, once the people had been settled in the land under Joshua, extending through centuries, into modern times, God has used the surrounding Gentile nations to deal

with His people in the preceding respect — subjection and persecution of His people both in the land (Book of Judges) and out of the land, with the Jewish people scattered among and persecuted by the Gentiles (from about the eighth century B.C. to the present time).

And whether in the type or the antitype, God's actions were/are *ALWAYS to effect correction*. This was seen in the type, and this will ultimately be seen in the antitype (during the coming Tribulation, when God's actions in this respect reach an apex, bringing to pass the same thing seen in the type).

In the type, in verse seven, God's actions (serpents sent throughout the camp) resulted in the Israelites coming to Moses and acknowledging what they had done.

In the antitype, God's actions (ultimately a type persecution without precedent at the hands of the Gentiles during the Tribulation) will result in the Israelites doing the same thing as seen in this type or in a corresponding type — Joseph's brothers being driven to the place where they were forced to come to him and acknowledge in his presence that which they had done years before (Gen. 44:12-16).

Then, note what happened in the type in Num. 21:8, 9, which is the part referenced in John 3:14, laying the groundwork for verse sixteen.

And when the nation of Israel is brought to this same place near the end of the Tribulation, *ALL* of this will be worked out in the antitype, *EXACTLY as in the types*.

Following Israel's repentance, allowing for Christ's return, the Jewish people will look upon the One Whom they pierced, confessing *in His presence* that which happened years before.

That foreshadowed in Gen. 44:12-16 will be fulfilled; that seen in Num. 21:8, 9, fulfilled in the type, will, because of past events seen in John 3:16 (the Son dying in man's stead), be fulfilled in the antitype.

And the whole of the matter — type and/or antitype —

was/is with a view to a theocracy, a kingdom out ahead (cf. Gen. 45:26).

b) Paul's Conversion

Paul was saved through Christ's personal appearance to him as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus. And he saw Christ in a quite different manner than numerous individuals had seen Him throughout the forty days between His resurrection and ascension.

During these forty days, Christ's body was *NOT* enswathed in a covering of Glory, as Peter, James, and John had seen Him on the Mount in Matt. 17:1-5, or as He appeared following His being "received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16).

But matters were quite different in Acts chapter nine, as they would have been when Stephen looked up into an opened heaven in Acts chapter seven and saw Christ enswathed in Glory, *EXACTLY* as Paul saw Him in chapter nine.

Paul was blinded by the light emanating from Christ enswathed in this covering, a light which he later described as "brighter than the sun," at mid-day (Acts 26:13).

Stephen, as well, could have been blinded by Christ's appearance, immediately before he was killed. We're not told.

And Paul was blind for three days, with his sight restored on the third day (Acts 9:9, 17, 18).

Paul later described himself, relative to his conversion experiences, as "one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8), and the matter is explained in I Tim. 1:15, 16:

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern [Gk., *hupotuposis*, a foundational type, "a prototype"] to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Paul was saved as a type — actually, from the Gk. text, as seen, a foundational type, “a prototype” — of “them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting [i.e., ‘life age-lasting,’ the 1,000-year Messianic Era].”

(Again, *EVERYTHING* during Man’s Day [the 6,000 years from the creation of Adam to the end of the full seventy sevens in Daniel’s prophecy] *moves toward the seventh 1,000-year period* [introduced in Gen. 2:1-3 and referenced every time the Jewish people kept/keep the Sabbath throughout their generations (Ex. 31:13-17)].

EVERYTHING moves toward the 1,000-year Messianic Era, NOT toward the eternal ages lying beyond.

And if one would properly understand Scripture — O.T or N.T — this MUST be recognized and understood.)

In I Cor. 15:8, Paul was brought forth “out of due time,” that is, before it was time for the one whom he typified to be brought forth, *which could ONLY have been an allusion to the future bringing forth, conversion, of the entire nation.*

Israel will be saved *through the personal appearance of Christ in all His Glory.* And this will occur on the third day, the third 1,000-year period dating back to the crucifixion, with the nation’s sight (spiritual) restored on that day.

And Paul’s evangelistic efforts in the type will *THEN* be seen once again in the antitype through the evangelistic efforts of a converted and restored Jewish nation.

ALL will be EXACTLY as set forth in the foundational type.

And that seen in John 3:1-21 will continue to be worked out in the lives of individuals throughout the entire 1,000 years of the Messianic Era, in the lives of the unsaved first, then in the lives of the saved.

APPENDIX IV

AION, AIONIOS

THE TWO MAIN GREEK WORDS TRANSLATED "ETERNAL" IN ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

(Material in this appendix article has been taken from Marvin R. Vincent's four-volume set, *Word Studies in the New Testament* [a standard word study which has been in use for well over 100 years].

Some editing of the original, printed text has been done to produce better clarity and easier reading, though no change alters any meaning in the original text [added paragraph divisions, transliterating Greek words to English lettering, some deletion of unneeded data, etc.].

This material comprises Vincent's comments on two Greek words, *aion* and *aionios*, which have to do with "time" — one a noun, the other an adjective, both meaning the same thing — often indiscriminately translated "age," "world," "forever," "eternal," or "everlasting" [depending on the English translation].

There is really no word for "eternal" or "everlasting" in the Greek text of the N.T. [nor is there one in the Hebrew text of the O.T., with *olam* the main word usually translated "eternal" or "everlasting"].

And, as will become evident from a correct understanding of *aion* and *aionios*, these two words have not only often been mistranslated, causing confusion, but a correct translation is, at times, quite difficult. The latter can only be true because there are no words in the English language which exactly correspond to these words in the Greek text.

Context must always be the determining factor in any translation of these words; and, many times in the N.T., since *ages* are often being dealt with, both words can often be understood in this respect.

For example, note the latter part of Luke 18:30 where both *aion* and *aionios* appear and where, contextually [vv. 18-29], an inheritance in the kingdom [to be realized in the coming age] is in view. Thus, this part of the verse should be properly translated, "...and in the age [*aion*] to come age-lasting [*aionios*] life."

And, in like manner, the question asked in the introductory verse of this passage [v. 18] should be translated, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit age-lasting [*aionios*] life." "Eternal life," often used in translations of this verse, is *not* inherited; it is a *free gift* [Eph. 2:8, 9]. One must be a child of the Owner to be in line for the inheritance [Rom. 8:17].)

The Noun, Aion

Aion, transliterated "aeon," is a period of time of longer or shorter duration, having a beginning and an end, and complete in itself.

Aristotle said, "The period which includes the whole time of each one's life is called *the aeon of each one*." Hence, it often means *the life of a man*, as in Homer, where one's life (*aion*) is said to leave him or to consume away.

It is not, however, limited to human life; it signifies *any period in the course of events*, as the period or age before Christ; the period of the Millennium; the period before the beginning of history.

The word does not have a stationary and mechanical value. It does not mean a period of fixed length for all cases. *There are as many aeons as entities*, the respective durations of which are fixed by the normal conditions of the several entities.

There is one aeon of a human life, another of the life of a nation. *The length of the aeon depends on the subject to which it is attached.*

Aion is sometimes translated "world," with "world" representing a period or a series of periods of time (cf. Matt. 12:32; 13:40, 49; I Cor. 1:20; 2:6; Eph. 1:21), having to do with the world's contents which are included in the duration of the world (I Cor. 2:7; 10:11; Heb. 1:2; 9:26; 11:3).

The word *always* carries the notion of *time*, and not of *eternity*. It *always* means a period of time. Otherwise, it would be impossible to account for the plural, or for such qualifying expressions as *this age*, or *the age to come*.

It does not mean something endless or everlasting.

To deduce that meaning from its relation to *aei* (a cognate word) is absurd; for, apart from the fact that the meaning of a word is not definitely fixed by its derivation, *aei* (like *aion*) *does*

not signify endless duration.

When the writer of the Pastoral Epistles quotes the saying that "the Cretians are always [*aei*] liars" (Titus 1:12), he surely does not mean that the Cretians will go on lying for all eternity (*cf.* Acts 7:51; II Cor. 4:11; 6:10; Heb. 3:10; I Peter 3:15). *Aei* means "habitually" or "continually" within the limit of the subject's life.

In our colloquial dialect "everlastingly" is used in the same way. "The boy is everlastingly tormenting me to buy him a drum."

In the New Testament, the history of the world is conceived as developed through a succession of aeons. A series of such aeons precedes the introduction of a new series inaugurated by the Christian dispensation, and the end of the world and the second coming of Christ are to mark the beginning of another series (*cf.* Eph. 3:11). Paul contemplates aeons before and after the Christian era (Eph. 1:21; 2:7; 3:9, 21; I Cor. 10:11; *cf.* Heb. 9:26).

He includes the series of aeons in one great aeon: *ho aion ton aionon*, "the aeon of the aeons" (Eph. 3:21); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes *the throne of God as enduring unto the aeon of the aeons* (Heb. 1:8).

The plural is also used, *aeons of the aeons*, signifying all the successive periods which make up the sum total of the ages collectively (Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20, etc.). This plural phrase is applied by Paul to God only.

The Adjective, Aionios

The adjective *aionios*, in like manner, carries the idea of "time." Neither the noun nor the adjective, in themselves, carry the sense of *endless or everlasting*, though they may acquire that sense by their connotation. *Aionios* means "enduring through or pertaining to a period of time." Both the noun and the adjective are applied to limited periods.

Thus the phrase *eis ton aiona* (*lit.*, "with respect to the aeon," appearing 29 times in the N.T. [*e.g.*, John 4:14; 6:51, 58; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 25]), habitually rendered "forever," is often used of *duration which is limited in the very nature of the case.*

Note a few out of many instances in the Septuagint (Greek

translation of the O.T.) pertaining to *aion* (Ex. 21:6; 29:9; 32:13; Lev. 25:46; Deut. 15:17; Josh. 14:9; 1 Sam. 8:13; I Chron. 28:4; cf. Matt. 21:19; John 13:8; I Cor. 8:13).

The same is true of *aionios* in the Septuagint. Out of 150 instances in the Septuagint, four-fifths imply *limited duration* (cf. Gen. 48:4; Num. 10:8; 15:15; Prov. 22:28; Jonah 2:6; Hab. 3:6).

Words which are habitually applied to things temporal or material cannot carry, in themselves, the sense of endlessness. Even when applied to God, we are not forced to render *aionios* "everlasting." Of course the life of God is endless; but the question is whether, in describing God as *aionios*, it was intended to describe the duration of His being, or whether some different and larger idea was not contemplated.

That God lives everlastingly, and has lived everlastingly, are, no doubt, great and significant facts; yet they are not the dominant or the most impressive facts in *God's relations to time*. God's eternity does not stand merely or chiefly for a scale of length. It is not primarily a mathematical but a moral fact.

The relations of God to time include and imply far more than the bare fact of endless continuance. They carry with them the fact that *God transcends time*; God works on different principles and on a vaster scale than the wisdom of time provides; God oversteps the conditions and the motives of time; God marshals the successive aeons from a point outside of time, on lines which run out into His own measureless cycles, and for sublime moral ends which the creature of threescore and ten years cannot grasp and does not even suspect.

In Rom. 16:26 Paul speaks of the eternal God (*tou aioniou Theou*); but that he does not mean the everlasting God is perfectly clear from the context. He has said that "the mystery" has been kept in silence in times eternal (*chronois aionious*), which he does not mean everlasting times, but the successive aeons which elapsed before Christ was proclaimed. God therefore is described as *the God of the aeons*, the God who pervaded and controlled those periods before the incarnation.

To the same effect is the title, *ho basileus ton aionion*, "the King of the aeons," applied to God in I Tim. 1:17. The phrase,

pro chronon aionion, “before eternal times” (II Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2), cannot mean before everlasting times. The meaning is of old. The grace and the promise were given in time, but far back in the ages, before the times of reckoning the aeons.

Zoe aionios, “eternal life,” which occurs 42 times in the N. T., but not in the Septuagint, is not endless life, but *life pertaining to a certain age or aeon, or continuing during that aeon*.

I repeat, *life may be endless; the life in union with Christ is endless, but the fact is not expressed by aionios*.

Kolesis aionios, rendered “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46), is the punishment peculiar to an aeon other than that in which Christ is speaking. In some cases, *zoe aionios* does not refer specifically to the life beyond time, but rather to the aeon or dispensation of Messiah, which succeeds the present dispensation (cf. Matt. 19:16; John 5:39).

John says that *zoe aionios* is the present possession of those who believe on the Son of God (3:36; 5:24; 6:47, 54). The Father’s commandment is *zoe aionios* (12:50); to know the only true God and Jesus Christ is *zoe aionios* (17:3).

Thus, while *aionios* carries the idea of time, though not of endlessness, there belongs to it also, more or less, a sense of quality. Its character is ethical rather than mathematical. The deepest significance of the life beyond time lies, not in endlessness, but in the moral quality of the aeon into which the life passes.

Other Considerations

It is comparatively unimportant whether or not the rich fool, when his soul was required of him (Luke 12:20), entered upon a state that was endless. The principal, the tremendous fact, as Christ unmistakably puts it, was that, in the new aeon, the motives, the aims, the conditions, the successes and awards of time counted for nothing.

In this life, his barns and their contents were *everything*; the soul was *nothing*. In the new life the soul was *first and everything*; the barns and storehouses were *nothing*.

Note the verb, *apollumi* in a similar respect, meaning “to de-

stroy," "put an end to," or in the middle voice, "to be lost, to perish." Peter says, "the world being deluged with water, perished" (*apollumi* [II Peter 3:6]); but the world did not become extinct, it was renewed.

In Heb. 1:11, 12, quoted from Ps. 102:25-27, we read concerning the heavens and the earth as compared with the eternity of God, "they shall perish" (*apollumi*). But the perishing is only preparatory to change and renewal. "They shall be changed" (*apollumi* [cf. Isa. 51:6, 16; 65:17; 66:22; II Peter 3:13]). Similarly, "the Son of man came to save that which was lost" (*apollumi* [Luke 19:10]). Jesus charged His apostles to go to "the lost [*apollumi*] sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6; cf. Matt. 15:24).

"He that shall lose [*apollumi*] his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25; cf. Luke 15:6, 9, 32).

In this passage the word "destruction" is qualified. It is "destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power" (Matt. 16:27-17:5; II Thess. 1:9), *at His second coming, in the new aeon*.

In other words, *it is the severance, at a given point in time, of those who obey not the gospel from the presence and the glory of Christ* (II Thess. 1:5-11).

Aionios may therefore describe this severance as continuing during the millennial aeon between Christ's coming and the final judgment, as being for the wicked prolonged throughout that aeon and characteristic of it.

Or, *aionios* may describe the severance as characteristic of or enduring through a period or aeon succeeding the final judgment, the extent of which period is not defined.

In neither case is *aionios* to be interpreted as "everlasting" or "endless."