Mysteries

of the

Kingdom

Paralleling That Seen in Revelation 2-20

A Study about the Result of the Proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom in Christendom throughout the Dispensation
Arlen L. Chitwood

There are two places in the New Testament which set forth *a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation relative to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom —*the central message of the New Testament.

Both accounts were given by Christ, on two different occasions:

1) Christ made *the first* known to His disciples during His earthly ministry; and this account was given in parabolic form and has been recorded in Matthew chapter thirteen.

2) Then, Christ made*the second* known to John at a time after His ascension, following John being removed into His presence — removed from Man’s Day into the Lord’s Day. And this second account was given via seven short epistles to seven Churches in Asia and has been recorded in Revelation chapters two and three.

These two accounts parallel one another and present two different pictures of*the same thing.* And each is followed by parallel accounts of events which also present two different pictures of *the same thing* as well.

The first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles to seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three present a history of the Church which extends throughout the dispensation, though from two different perspectives. And this history, in each account, centers around the proclamation of *the Word of the Kingdom.*

Then, the subsequent fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the subsequent fifth through nineteenth chapters in the Book of Revelation record parallel events which deal with *the same thing,* presenting different facets of events which follow the present dispensation. That depicted by these two parables in the Gospel of Matthew and events recorded in these chapters in the Book of Revelation have to do with two things: *1) Christ’s redemption of the forfeited inheritance, and 2) Christ’s bride becoming His wife.*

Then the seventh parable in Matthew chapter thirteen carries matters forward into the Messianic Kingdom. And the parallel counterpart in the Book of Revelation is the opening part of chapter twenty.

The whole of that covered in these seven parables in Matthew, or in these nineteen chapters in the Book of Revelation, begins with events surrounding Christ’s first coming and moves forward through time into events surrounding Christ’s second coming.

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of the

Kingdom

Paralleling That Seen in Revelation 2-20

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“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.
And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
And he spake many things unto them in parables…
When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom…
…every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:1-3a, 19a, 52b).

Cover photograph: The California Pacific Coast, Winter, 2008 *Introduction* iii

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of the

Kingdom

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by Arlen L. Chitwood
The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

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www.lampbroadcast.org

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FOREWORD

In relation to the central message of the New Testament — *the Word of the Kingdom*— first century Christianity and twentieth century Christianity would have *very little* in common. Things have changed in Christendom to that degree, and *they have NOT changed for the better.* Rather, relative to correct, Biblical teachings regarding the Word of the Kingdom, over the past two millenniums there has been a steady deterioration.

The central message of the New Testament was universally understood and taught throughout the first century Church. But this same message, except in isolated instances, *is NOT understood or taught at all throughout the twentieth century Church.*

The false message concerning the kingdom, introduced by Satan very early in the dispensation through false teachers (apostates) in the Church, resulted in a continuing deterioration which has left Christendom in its present condition, two millenniums later. And it matters not whether one is viewing Christendom from the standpoint of those in fundamental circles or those in liberal circles. In relation to a knowledge of and attitude toward the Word of the Kingdom,*EXACTLY the same thing can be seen among those in BOTH groups.*

Those in fundamental circles don’t understand any more about *the Word of the Kingdom* than those in liberal circles do. And anyone daring to proclaim this message today will be fought against by those in both groups — usually more so by the fundamentalists than by the liberals.

*In relation to this message, BOTH groups exist in an almost completely leavened state*; and both are seen described in Rev. 3:17 as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

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The seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen have to do with both *Christendom and Israel.* The first four parables cover a history of Christendom in relation to *the Word of the Kingdom* which extends throughout the dispensation; and the last three parables continue with events which will occur after the dispensation has run its course, events having to do with both *Christendom* and *Israel,* events during and immediately following the Tribulation which lead into the Messianic Era.

*Never* in the history of the Church has it been more important for Christians to understand that which is revealed in these parables than it is today, for *never in the history of the Church has the Word of the Kingdom been more misunderstood and spoken against than it is today.*

Christians are in a race — the race of “the faith” — with its corresponding spiritual warfare. *And the HIGHEST of all possible prizes is being held out for the victors* — *that of being accorded the privilege of ascending the throne with God’s Son and ruling over the earth as co-heirs with Him for 1,000 years.*

A Christian *can overcome* in the present race, in the present warfare, and occupy one of these positions with God’s Son; or he *can be overcome* in this race, in this warfare, and fail to occupy one of these positions.

*This is the message which Satan has fought so hard to destroy.* And, is it any wonder that Satan has expended so much time and effort to do away with this message? Christ and His co-heirs are to take the kingdom and rule the very domain which Satan and his angels rule today.

Satan and his angels are to be put down, and Christ and His coheirs are to ascend the throne in their stead. And this is something which Satan, *at all costs*, has sought to avoid.

This is *the realm* where Satan centers his attack against Christians and against the Word of God. This is at *the heart of all things* surrounding the spiritual warfare.

Satan attacks Christians, seeking *at all costs to bring about their defeat in the race of the faith,*causing them to be disqualified for *the prize set before them.*

And he attacks the message which relates these things — *the Word of the Kingdom* — seeking *at all costs to corrupt and destroy this message.
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And how well Satan has succeeded can be seen on every hand today. This message is all but absent in the Churches throughout the land, and the vast majority of Christians throughout these same Churches lack any real spiritual direction and purpose in their lives.

This is what the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 has done during a period encompassing almost two millenniums.

This is the state in which Christendom finds itself near the end of the dispensation.
And this existing state of Christendom should surprise no one, *for Scripture CLEARLY REVEALS that this is the way the dispensation would end.
These are the things developed in the thirteen chapters of this book.*

1

Israel’s Rejection

***Events in Matt. 12, Leading into Matt. 13***

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.
And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
And he spake many things unto them in parables…” (Matt. 13:1-3a).

Matthew chapter thirteen records seven connected parables which Christ gave at a particular time during His earthly ministry, calling them, “mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens” (v. 11). These parables comprise the first of the numerous *mysteries*seen in the New Testament and have to do with the same thing that any other mystery in the New Testament has to do with — *an opening up and unveiling of that which has lain in the Old Testament from the beginning.*

There is *nothing* in the New Testament which does not have its roots one or more places in the Old. “The mystery” revealed to Paul (Eph. 3:1ff), for example, not only had its roots in the Old Testament Scriptures but drew from Paul’s personal knowledge of these Scriptures (Acts 9:20-22) — moving beyond “the letter” to “the spirit” of the matter (II Cor. 3:6-18) — opening Scriptures which he already knew, providing further light on these Scriptures.

And so it is with the mysteries of the kingdom in Matthew chapter thirteen. These mysteries have their roots in the Old Testament Scriptures and draw from a presumed knowledge of these Scriptures by those to whom the mysteries are directed.

1

These are mysteries opened up and revealed by Christ through the use of parables, a form of teaching which He began to extensively use at this point in His ministry. Christ had used parables sparingly prior to this time (*e.g.,*Luke 5:36-39), but from this point forward, for a particular revealed reason, *parables began to occupy a major part of His ministry.*

(The English word “parable” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *parabole,* a compound word which means “to cast alongside” [*para*, “alongside,” *bole*, “to cast”] A parable, by its own definition, is *one thing placed alongside of something previously existing, which could only be present truth placed alongside of previously revealed truth. And the additional truth would be given to help explain the previously revealed truth.*

This is why these parables could be *understood* by the disciples but would be *meaningless* to numerous others in the nation [vv. 10-17]. Understanding the presently revealed truths, the parables, depended on whether or not the previously revealed truths had been received.

The disciples had received the previously revealed truths. Therefore, they would understand the parables, for the parables dealt with that which they had previously received.

But those rejecting Christ and His message had not received the previously revealed truths. Therefore, they would not be able to understand the parables, for the parables dealt with that which they had previously rejected.)

Though these parables form truths placed alongside things revealed in the Old Testament, they, as well, form truths placed alongside things which had been revealed during Christ’s earthly ministry (things completely in accord with and drawn from Old Testament Scripture). And, in this respect, though they have their basis in the Old Testament Scriptures, they emanate out of things having previously been revealed during Christ’s earthly ministry, particularly things immediately preceding Christ’s departure from *the house* and His beginning to give these parables by *the seaside.*

Thus, Matthew chapter thirteen has to do with *an opening up and unveiling, through using parables, of mysteries surrounding the kingdom of the heavens.*

And the kingdom of the heavens in this chapter is a kingdom seen in *EXACTLY the same form* in which it was previously seen in this gospel, or in the Old Testament Scriptures. *This chapter continues, from previous Scripture, dealing with a LITERAL, EXISTING kingdom.*

There is absolutely *NO difference* in the way in which the form of the kingdom of the heavens exists and is seen at any point in Scripture throughout Man’s Day and the future Lord’s Day, throughout 7,000 years of time — past, present, and future. The reference is to *the heavenly realm of the kingdom associated with this earth.* The reference is to *the rule of the heavens over the earth.*

During past and present time, throughout Man’s Day, Satan and his angels (though disqualified) have ruled over the earth from this heavenly realm.

But in the future, during the coming Lord’s Day, angels will no longer rule the earth from this realm. Rather, Man — namely, Christ and His co-heirs — will take the sceptre and rule from this heavenly realm (Heb. 2:5-10; 4:4-9; 5:6, 10; *cf.* Ps. 110:1-4).

And the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens — whether to Israel (past), or to Christians (present) — has to do with *Man moving into this heavenly realm, occupying this realm, and holding the sceptre.*

*ALL seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen have to do with this subject.* This is something clearly stated at the outset in these parables, and they *MUST* be so interpreted and understood.

(There is widespread, erroneous thought in Christendom today which attempts to associate that which is stated in the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen with some type *mystery form of the kingdom* existing during the present dispensation. However, such a form of the kingdom does not presently exist; nor has it ever existed; nor will it ever exist.

And along with this erroneous thought of an existing *mystery form of the kingdom,* a related error exists — that of seeing *a presently existing form of the Son’s kingdom* [somehow existing in the hearts of men] which will be brought into full reality at a future time. This type understanding of the kingdom is little more than another way of dealing with a so-called present *mystery form of the kingdom.*

The Son — rather than presently ruling in the kingdom in view, in which Satan and his angels hold the sceptre — *is seated at the right hand of His Father, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, at which time He will take the kingdom* [Ps. 110:1].

Further, *the Son is presently occupying the office of High Priest, not*

*that of King* . He is presently ministering on behalf of Christians in the heavenly sanctuary, with a view to “bringing many sons unto glory” [Heb. 2:5-10; 10:19-22]. His Kingship, the time when He and His co-heirs will ascend the throne together, lies in the future [Heb. 1:9; 3:14; 4:4-9].

A misunderstanding of verses such as Col. 1:13 has led numerous Christians to erroneously view a present aspect to Christ’s future kingdom. However, *neither this verse nor any other verse teaches such a thing.*

Colossians 1:13 deals with *Christians being moved from one place to another with respect to two manifestations of the kingdom* — *present under Satan,* and *future under Christ.*

Christians, according to this verse, have been delivered from the power of darkness [having to do with the kingdom under Satan] and have been translated [have been moved from one place to another, have been caused to change sides] with respect to the kingdom of Christ.

There can be *NO such thing* as being translated into the kingdom of Christ during the present dispensation, for *such a kingdom DOESN’T presently exist.*

But there is such a thing as being caused to change sides with respect to two forms of the same kingdom — both *present*and *future.* This is what the epistles are about, and this is what is in view in Col. 1:13.)

Attempts to understand the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen after any fashion which ignores the context and/or subject matter at hand will leave one hopelessly lost in a sea of misinterpretation. These parables are quite simple to understand if one allows Scripture to be its own interpreter. But, if this is not done, matters become difficult to hopeless when it comes to understanding that which the Lord revealed in these parables.

**Events Leading into Matthew Chapter Thirteen**

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah at His first coming, as Elijah will appear as the forerunner of the Messiah at His second coming.

A prophecy which had to do with Elijah was applied to John the Baptist (*cf.* Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3); and John was said by Jesus to be Elijah, with *a condition* applied to the statement (Matt. 11:13, 14).

The passage in Isaiah, applied to John the Baptist, is set in a context surrounding Messiah’s coming at a time when Israel repents and the nation is healed (vv. 1-5). This, of course, *didn’t occur* during or following John’s appearance, though the prophecy was applied to John.

*The fulfillment of this prophecy will occur ONLY following Elijah’s appearance, yet future, as the forerunner of the Messiah* (Mal. 4:1-6).
Christ’s statement concerning John being Elijah carried the condition, “if ye will receive.” That is to say, if the nation would have received the message, Elijah, rather than John, would have appeared at that time as the forerunner of the Messiah.
The latter was conditioned on the former. God though, in His foreknowledge, knew what Israel would do and sent John the Baptist instead of Elijah as the forerunner of Christ at His first coming.
John the Baptist was the Elijah of his day, as Elijah will be the John the Baptist of his day. And the two men are so closely associated with one another that the prophecy applying to Elijah at Christ’s second coming in Isa. 40:3 could be applied to John at Christ’s first coming in Matt. 3:3.

*1) Ministry of John, Jesus, and the Twelve*

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judaea with a single, simple message: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). This was a message directed to the nation of Israel, calling for national repentance relative to sin, disobedience. And the nation’s repentance was with a view to the Jewish people holding the sceptre, with their Messiah, within the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

The kingdom was “at hand [had ‘drawn near’]” because Messiah was present. The King of the kingdom — the One destined to replace Satan as the ruler over this earth — was present; and *the sceptre could, at that time, have passed FROM the hands of Satan and his angels INTO the hands of Man, conditioned on Israel’s repentance.*

Israel was being offered regal positions with the nation’s Messiah, in a heavenly realm; *but there was a CONDITION.
The nation had to repent. The nation had to change its mind.*

(Note that Israel had been made the repository of both heavenly and earthly regal promises in the O.T. [Gen. 13:16; 14:18-22; 15:5; 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:14; 32:12; Ex. 32:13;*cf.* Heb. 11:12-16].

The nation had realized *earthly* regal promises and blessings in the O.T. theocracy and will realize these same promises and blessings again, but in *a much fuller sense,* when the kingdom has been restored to Israel yet future [Acts 1:6; 3:19-21;*cf. cf.* 28; 39:25-29].

But that facet of the kingdom offered to Israel at Christ’s first com - ing was *heavenly,* not earthly. The *heavenly* facet of the kingdom was the other part of the kingdom in Israel’s possession, though not yet realized.

And this was that part of the kingdom later taken from Israel [Matt. 21:33-46], which is today being offered to *the one new man*“in Christ.”
This was all foreshadowed by the Jewish religious leaders’ rejection of Christ in Matt. 12 and the seven parables which Christ gave immediately following their rejection, on the same day, in Matt. 13.)

The totality of the message proclaimed by John was a call for *the nation of Israel (the entire nation) to repent (to change its mind),* with a view to the Jewish people occupying regal positions with the nation’s Messiah in *the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.*

Satan and his angels would be put down, and Christ and the repentant nation would move in and take the kingdom.
However, things didn’t go in this direction, and John eventually found himself in prison. Then Jesus took up the same message, which, under His ministry, was accompanied by *miraculous signs — signs having to do with the kingdom, which centered around physical healings.*
Jesus went throughout all Galilee doing centrally two things:

1) “Preaching the gospel of the kingdom.”
2) “Healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matt. 4:12, 17-25).

*The message concerned the proffered kingdom, and the healings were miraculous signs intimately and inseparably connected with the message being proclaimed.*

*Israel was sick* (the result of past sin, disobedience), “from the sole of the foot even unto the head,” and *healing for the nation* was in the offing, *conditioned upon the nation’s repentance.*

All of this — Israel’s condition and that which could and would occur following Israel’s repentance — was set forth in detail numerous places in Old Testament prophecy. But one section of the numerous prophecies will suffice to illustrate the point — a section of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Note how Isaiah opened his prophecy. He began by describing *Israel’s present condition:*

“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they have gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.
From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa. 1:4-6).

Then Isaiah continued his prophecy by describing *Israel’s healing.* He went on to describe *what the nation could have, IF…*

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.
Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isa. 1:16-19).

And, beyond that, Isaiah concluded a section of his prophecy by describing *conditions in Israel following the time of the nation’s repentance and healing:*

“And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin [paralleling ‘dross,’ undoubtedly referring to metals in an impure sense].

And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city…

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go up and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations…” (Isa. 1:25, 26; 2:2-4a).

Christ’s message to Israel, along with the message of the Twelve whom He later commissioned (Matt. 10:1-8) — in complete keeping with Isaiah’s prophecy (among numerous other Old Testament prophecies) — was simply a call for the nation *to repent,* with a view *to healing* and *the nation being established in her God-ordained position in the kingdom* (Ex. 19:5, 6).

The healing of an individual constituted *a sign for the Jewish people to visibly behold, showing them what could happen to the entire nation, IF…*
“Repentance” on the part of Israel was *the SOLE condition* in the message proclaimed to the nation by John, Jesus, and the Twelve: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” *THEN*, *following national repentance, healing would occur.*
The Jewish people were to change their minds about their prior attitude toward God’s commandments (Isa. 1:19; *cf.* Lev. 26:3ff; Deut. 28:1ff). They had previously disobeyed that which God had commanded. And because of this disobedience, Israel had not only failed to fully occupy her God-ordained position in the Old Testament theocracy but the day came when this theocracy ceased to exist; and, in connection with the end of the Old Testament theocracy, Israel found herself removed from her land and scattered among the Gentile nations.

(The northern ten tribes were carried into captivity by the Assyrians about 722 B.C., and the southern two tribes were carried into captivity by the Babylonians about 605 B.C., beginning the Times of the Gentiles.

And about two decades later the Shekinah Glory departed from the holy of holies of the temple in Jerusalem, ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives, marking the end of the Old Testament theocracy.)

And even during the time Christ was on earth, though a remnant was back in the land, the nation remained under Gentile dominion, with most of the Jewish people still scattered among the nations.

The Times of the Gentiles, which began during the days of Nebuchadnezzar, continued then, as it still continues today.
John opened the message to Israel concerning the proffered kingdom, Christ continued this message following John being cast into prison, and the Twelve later also carried this same message to Israel (later yet, Seventy). And, though numerous Jewish people heeded the call and repented, the nation as a whole refused. The nation as a whole refused to change its mind relative to disobedience, something which had marked the history of the nation since that time, down through the centuries.

*2) Israel’s Climactic Rejection*
Events surrounding the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to
Israel, beginning with John and continuing with Jesus and the Twelve,
reached an apex in Matthew chapter twelve. And the apex reached
was *REJECTION on the part of the nation, NOT acceptance.* In this chapter, Christ healed a man on the Sabbath (vv. 9-13), pointing to Israel’s coming healing on the Sabbath (the seventh millennium,
the coming Lord’s Day, following the six millenniums comprising
Man’s Day [*cf.* Num. 19:11, 12; Hosea 5:15-6:2; Matt. 17:1-5]). And,
following this miraculous sign, “the Pharisees went out, and held a
council against him, how they might destroy him” (v. 14). The Pharisees (along with the Scribes) — fundamental, legalistic
religious leaders — were, by far, the largest of the religious parties in
Israel. And, occupying this position, they sat “in Moses’ seat” (Matt.
23:2), controlling the religious life of the nation.
This controlling group of religious leaders followed Christ about
the country, seeking, at every turn, to counter both His message and
the miraculous signs He was performing. And, in this chapter they
reached an apex in their rejection by not only rejecting the manifested
sign of a man being healed on the Sabbath (pointing to Israel’s healing
on the Sabbath) but by subsequently holding a council concerning
how they might be able to do away with the One having performed
this sign (Matt. 12:10-14).
Then, later in the chapter, Christ healed a man who was both
blind and dumb, a man also possessed with a demon (v. 22). And the Pharisees, in their negative attitude toward the manifested signs, reached a terminal point in their rejection of Christ and His works after this sign had been performed. They attributed the power behind the manifestation of this miraculous sign to *Satan* (v. 24). And doing this after they had rejected the sign pertaining to Israel being healed on the Sabbath, along with subsequently seeking to do away with
Christ, was *the final straw.*
These signs were being performed through the power of the Spirit
(in complete keeping with the way God performs His works [*cf.* Gen.
1:2b]); and the Pharisees, attributing Christ’s works to Satan, committed what was called by Christ, “the blasphemy against the Holy
Spirit” (v. 31).
The Pharisees had previously done the same thing (Matt. 9:34),
but here in chapter twelve the setting was different. Here, this act
by the Pharisees follows their rejecting the sign of the Sabbath and
their attempting to do away with the One having performed this sign.
Israel’s religious leaders, at this point, *had gone beyond that which could
be allowed.*And Christ stated, relative to that which had been done:

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [‘age’], neither in the world [‘age’] to come” (vv. 31, 32).

For all practical purposes the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel, though the announcement was not made until later (Matt. 21:43). And it was at this point in Christ’s ministry that a major change occurred.

The Scribes and Pharisees, immediately after Christ told them that they had committed a sin having far-reaching consequences, had the effrontery to ask Christ for an additional sign (v. 38). They had rejected all of His previous signs, even attributing the power behind the last one to Satan, and now they asked for something which they had previously rejected time after time.

This was little more than a personal affront, further seeking, by any means possible, to discredit the One performing these signs (as they had previously attempted to do). But Jesus, knowing full-well their thoughts, responded with the only sign which would now be given to them — the sign of the prophet Jonah, pointing to His coming death, burial, and resurrection rather than to the kingdom (vv. 39, 40).

Then Christ described the condition in which the nation of Israel now found itself — a condition resulting from the actions of Israel’s religious leaders, misleading the people (*cf.* Matt. 12:14-23).

The men of Nineveh would rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah. And One greater than Jonah was standing in Israel’s midst, calling for the nation’s repentance, but to no avail (v. 41).

The queen of the south would, likewise, rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for she had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And One greater than Solomon was standing in Israel’s midst, One Whom the Jewish people wouldn’t hear (v. 42).

The nation was to be left in *a desolate condition,* wherein the Jewish people would walk through dry places, seeking rest, and find none. And, should the people comprising this nation persist in their disobedience, particularly relative to any attempt to bring about a change in their state themselves, conditions would only become *worse.* Their latter end would be “worse than the first” (vv. 43-45; *cf.* Lev. 26:18-31).

And this is the setting for *Christ’s departure from the house, His going down by the seaside, and His beginning to speak in parables* in Matthew chapter thirteen.

**Christ’s Actions, Continued Rejection**

The seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen present *a sharp change in God’s dealings with the nation of Israel.* Heretofore, events surrounding the proffered kingdom had been strictly *Jewish* in nature, *but NOW something completely new and different* in relation to this kingdom is introduced.

*These parables have to do with the kingdom of the heavens as it pertains to individuals SEPARATE and DISTINCT from the nation of Israel.*
Before Christ began to speak in parables, He went “out of the house, and sat by the seaside” (v. 1). The first four parables were spoken *outside the house, down by the seaside*(vv. 3-9, 18-33). Then, Christ went back “into the house” (v. 36) and gave three more parables (vv. 44-50).
The use of “house” and “seaside” is *fraught with significance and meaning.*“The house,” from which Christ departed, and later reentered, is a reference to *the house of Israel* (Matt. 10:6; 23:38); and “the seaside,” to which Christ went, is a reference to *the Gentiles* (Jonah 1:12; 2:10; Rev. 13:1).
Thus, within the symbolism of that which is stated, the Lord left Israel (departed the house), went to the Gentiles (sat by the seaside, then in a boat on the sea), and gave four parables. Then the Lord returned to Israel (went back inside the house) and gave three additional parables.
*The kingdom of the heavens* — about to be taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel — would have been taken from Israel prior to the time (a future time) of the occurrence of events revealed in the first four parables, spoken outside the house. And the last three parables, though spoken back *inside the house, could NOT really pertain to Israel per se.* Because of the subject matter — *the kingdom of the heavens, having previously been taken from Israel* — *these parables would have to STILL pertain centrally to those outside the house, associated with the seaside*(note that there is no mention of Christ leaving the seaside [leaving the Gentiles] when He reentered the house [returned to Israel]).
In this respect, the first four parables would concern the Lord’s dealings with *a people other than Israel, associated with the Gentiles;* and these dealings would have to do with *these people in a particular realm*—*in relation to the kingdom of the heavens.*
Then, the last three parables, because of the continued subject matter (*the kingdom of the heavens*), would have to continue the continuity of thought from the first four. And further, though spoken back inside the house, these parables really cannot be Jewish in nature (for, again, they deal with *the kingdom of the heavens* — a sphere of the kingdom in which Israel could no longer have a part).
All seven parables have to do with *events during time* which elapses following the Nobleman’s departure “into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom,” and with *events during time* surrounding His “return” after receiving the kingdom (*cf.* Luke 19:12ff). Other than allusions back to Christ’s dealings with Israel during His earthly ministry and the events of Calvary, there is *nothing* in these parables which occurs before Christ’s departure from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9). Events depicted in these parables occur *almost entirely* during the time of Christ’s absence (Ps. 110:1), and events in these parables will be *concluded* immediately following Christ’s return (Rev. 19:11ff).
These parables — centering around a message pertaining to *the kingdom of the heavens* — have to do with an offer of the kingdom to *a people other than Israel, following the removal of the kingdom from Israel* (*cf.* Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10). These parables have to do with *the message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens during and following the present dispensation,* and these parables conclude with*events surrounding Christ’s return* (after He, the Nobleman in Luke 19:12, has received the kingdom from the Father [*cf.* Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff]).
*The course of the dispensation* is depicted in the first four parables, and the last three have to do with*concluding events*(directly related to that previously revealed in the first four) which will not only bring the age to a close but also usher in the next age, the Messianic Era.
Thus, the Lord reentering the house is not an act which places an emphasis on His dealing with Israel once again. Rather, *the emphasis remains where it is seen in the first four parables.* Nor, as previously stated, is there any mention of Christ leaving the seaside when He goes back inside the house. And the significance of this is seen in the fact that *His prior dealings with the Gentiles (first four parables) would continue.*
Israel is reintroduced because that dealt with in the final three parables cannot be accomplished apart from God dealing with the Jewish people once again. But the emphasis in these three parables *continues* from the same place in which it was seen in the first four parables.

(Briefly stated, all seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen form *a continuous discourse having to do with the kingdom of the heavens being offered to a people other than Israel.* The nation of Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom, and the kingdom was about to be taken from Israel, with a view to a separate and distinct entity [the Church] being called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [Matt. 21:33-43].

In the first four parables, *Israel is not in view.* These parables have to do with *God’s dealings with this new entity, separate from Israel*, *during a time when Israel is set aside;* but in the last three parables, *Israel is brought back into the picture. And God begins to deal with the nation once again, with a view to two things:*

*1. God concluding His dealings with Israel* [something not seen per se in these parables but seen numerous places in related Scripture].
*2. God concluding His dealings with the new entity brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected* [the central issue seen in these parables].

Because of Israel’s connection with certain concluding events relating to the Church, Christ had to go back inside the house before delivering the last three parables.

The first four parables have to do with the course of Christendom during the present dispensation [the course of the period during which God is removing from *the Gentiles* “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14)], with Israel set aside; and the last three parables have to do with events occurring after God resumes His national dealings with Israel, following the removal of the Church from the earth and God turning once again to Israel. But the Church, though having been removed from the earth before events in these last three parables begin to occur, is still*the central figure* seen throughout these parables.

The setting for the last three parables is the coming Tribulation and events surrounding Christ’s subsequent return. And, though the Church will not be on earth during the Tribulation, this period really has just as much to do with the Church as with Israel.

The Tribulation, along with being “the time of Jacob’s trouble” [Jer. 30:7], will be the time when the redemption [*future,* not past] of the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs will occur. And this *future redemption,* having to do with *the inheritance,* will also include *the bride* — having already been redeemed, past — who, through this future redemptive act, will become Christ’s wife.

[On the preceding, refer to Chapter VIII in this book, or the author’s books, *Ruth*, Chapter IX, *The Time of the End*, Chapters VIII, IX, and *The Rapture and Beyond*, Chapters V-VIII].

This entire sequence of events, along with related events which usher in the Messianic Kingdom, is depicted in the last three parables. And, in this respect, the last three parables simply form a chronological continuation and conclusion to the events depicted in the first four parables, with all seven parables forming a history of Christendom in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, extending from the time of the Church’s inception on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. to that future time when the Church is present, with Christ, in the Messianic Kingdom.)

2

I Will Return

***Israel’s Present Return, Major Problems***

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.
Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.
Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of the man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matt. 12:43-45).

These are Christ’s closing recorded words to Israel’s religious leaders *AFTER* they had committed the “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (12:24-32), *BEFORE* He “went…out of the house,” “sat by the seaside,” and began to speak “in parables” (13:1-3).

*The house*—*“your house,” the house of Israel*— during time covered by events seen in these parables, was to be left “empty, swept, and garnished [‘put in order’]” (v. 44; *cf.*Matt. 23:38). The house was *to stand vacant*(“empty”), and it was to be “swept” and “put in order” relative to its vacated state. *NOTHING was to remain.*

And, once the house of Israel found itself in this condition (which would include *the people, the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land*), the nation was left with *ONLY* the same previously existing recourse: *Repentance.*

But, should repentance not be forthcoming — with the Jewish people persisting in their disobedience, ignoring the reason for their condition, seeking to bring about a change in the existing situation themselves — *matters would ONLY become worse.*

15

God had revealed through Moses, at the beginning, that Israel would not be allowed to continue indefinitely in disobedience. The nation would ultimately be brought to the place of *repentance.* And, to bring this to pass, if necessary, Israel’s punishment would be inten- sified *seven times* (Lev. 26:18-31). Israel, through this means, would be brought to *a place where the nation would have NO recourse OTHER than to turn to the God of their fathers* (*cf.*Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7ff; Jonah 2:2-10).

Then, fifteen hundred years after God had revealed this through Moses, Christ called attention to this established, fundamental truth immediately before He left the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak in parables (Matt. 12:43-45; 13:1ff).

Matthew 12:43-45 revealsan “unclean spirit”dwelling in thehouse prior to the house being left “empty, swept, and garnished.” Then, following this — because of Israel’s refusal to repent, and because of Israel’s efforts to bring about a change in the existing situation through naturalistic means — “seven other spirits,” *more wicked than the first,* would take up residence in the house, *with the latter state of the nation being FAR WORSE than the former state* (v. 45)*.*

(“Seven” is a complete number, showing *the completeness of that which is in view.* “Seven times,” or “seven other spirits,” may refer to *completeness* rather than to *a literal seven-fold intensity.*

However, either way, matters would be quite similar. With *completeness* in view, *intensity* would be involved; and this intensity could, at times, possibly be even greater than seven-fold.)

Israel was *sick*(resulting from sin, disobedience [Isa. 1:4-6]); and “the house,” *the house of Israel,* was about to be left *desolate.*And the nation’s condition *would continue after this fashion UNTIL a certain decreed time.*

This condition would continue *UNTIL* matters had become so bad that Israel would be forced to cry out to the God of their Fathers for help (Ex. 2:23-25). And, correspondingly, the nation would, in that day, through Divine power, be brought into *such dire straits* that the Jewish people would willingly, gladly, and eagerly say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:37-39; *cf.*Isa. 53:1ff).

Israel’s condition was/is of *Divine origin,* and the nation’s cure must also be of *Divine origin* (Hosea 5:13-6:2). *A Divine purpose* lies behind the nation’s present Divinely decreed condition — a purpose having to do with bringing a nation to the end of itself, *leaving the nation with NO place to turn OTHER than to the God of their fathers.*

(A similar *Divine work*can be seen in Zech. 1:14, 15, where the Lord set about to chasten His son, Israel, because of disobedience; but, in this case, the Gentile nations stepped in and “helped forward the affliction.”

That is, God, in His infinite wisdom, set about to chasten His son in order to bring about *correction.* And the Gentiles, seeing Israel being chastened, stepped in and sought to intensify the nation‘s sufferings.

And God will not countenance such action. God said that He was “a little displeased” with Israel, resulting in the chastening; but, when the Gentiles stepped in and “helped forward the affliction,” God said that He was “very sore displeased” with the Gentiles.

In this respect, the Gentile nations should take note of that which has been happening and continues to happen to Israel today. It is, again, *the same chastening hand of God, for the same purpose.* And God will no more countenance interference in His plans and purposes for Israel today than He would in Old Testament days.

Should any Gentile nation attempt such [as some already have], God will, again, be “very sore displeased”; and the principle set forth in Gen. 12:3 will still apply: “I will…curse him that curseth thee.”)

**A Modern-Day Situation**

An interesting situation pertaining to God chastening His son, Israel, *because of continued disobedience,* has developed during modern times. And this is something which affects not only Israel but the surrounding Gentile nations as well.

*Israel has sought to return to her land, while, at the same time, remaining in disobedience.* And, attempting to return after this fashion is not only attempting to return before the time but also attempting to reverse that which God has decreed concerning Israel’s sickness and desolation.

It is attempting, *through humanistic means,* to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house, *the house of Israel.* And an attempt of this nature can only result in *seven other spirits, more wicked than the first, entering into the house.*

*The principle has been established* — given by God through Moses, reiterated by Christ — and *it CANNOT be broken.*

With an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, in the eyes of man, Israel has seemingly succeeded in that which the nation attempted (*return to the land, and change that which God had previously decreed*).

But, in the eyes of God, though an Israeli nation presently exists in the Middle East, matters are viewed from *a quite different perspective.*Ac- cording to Scripture, all of the best efforts put forth by Israel — seeking to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house — *can only have ONE end. Conditions for the nation can ONLY become worse.*

One need only look at a decaying Middle East situation, in the light of Scripture, to see what is *really happening.* Intensifying trouble exists throughout the Middle East. The whole area is like a powder keg, with a lit fuse, waiting to explode. And the nations (Israel and the Gentile nations, including the United States) are desperately, though vainly, seeking to defuse the situation.

But neither Israel nor the Gentile nations have any understanding at all of that which is happening. They have no understanding of *the nature* of the problem, *why* it exists, or *how* to deal with it. And, even if they did understand all the ramifications of the existing problem, they couldn’t even begin to deal with it.

*God ALONE is the ONLY One Who can possibly deal with it!*

*The whole of the existing problem is a matter between God and Israel* — “I will take away, and *NONE* shall rescue him” (Hosea 5:13, 14).

*And the whole of the revealed solution is ALSO a matter between God and Israel* — “…*TILL* they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face…” (Hosea 5:15-6:2).

*An eluding Middle East peace is the MOST intractable problem facing man in the world today.* And Israel, along with the Gentile nations — understanding somewhat the gravity of the situation if it is allowed to continue (though still not understanding “why” this is the case) — *are desperately seeking a solution.*

But a solution will *NOT* be forthcoming *UNTIL a full-end* to the decreed “seven times” or “seven other spirits,” in relation to Israel’s chastisement, has come to pass. And the nations, awaiting the *full-end* to a problem and situation which they can’t even begin to understand or deal with, don’t have a clue concerning which way to turn.

Various plans are being studied and considered, and concessions are being made which were unheard of only a short time back. But *ALL of man’s best efforts will fail.*This is simply something *which man has NO control over and CANNOT deal with.*

And where is it all headed? From a Scriptural standpoint, *there is ONLY one possible answer.* It is all headed toward *a climactic, desolate end* — an end *seven times worse* than it would have been had the Jewish people not persisted in their disobedience and sought, themselves, to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s books, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!* and *O Sleeper! Arise, Call…!*)
**A Man Seemingly Possessing the Answer**

In the immediate future, a man is going to appear in the Middle East with the seeming solution to the insoluble problem. And he will undoubtedly be received with open arms by the world at large, for he will appear to have the answer to this intractable problem.

But, though his solution for Middle East peace will appear to work for awhile, the end result will be exactly as stated by Christ in Matt. 12:43-45. Instead of one wicked spirit in the house, in the end, *seven spirits more wicked than the first* will be found therein.

Israel will seek to be cured of her sickness through an association with this man — the man of sin, the Antichrist.
But he will be *UNABLE to effect a cure. The Lord* wrought Israel’s sickness, and *ONLY the Lord can effect the nation’s cure*(Hosea 5:13, 14).
The matter of a Jewish nation, a remnant in the land today, is as Jonah *out of the Lord’s will, asleep in the hold of the ship, out of the sea.*
This remnant in the land today, *out of the Lord’s will,* is no longer scattered among the nations. They are *in their own land, out of the sea, though asleep to the true nature of their condition and calling.*

(“The sea” is used in Scripture referring to *the Gentile nations* and to *death.*And though the remnant in the land is no longer scattered among the nations, they are*spiritually dead.* Though removed from the sea in one sense, they have not been removed from the sea in another.)

In Jonah’s case, *the sea raged* as long as this condition persisted —

Jonah asleep on board the ship, out of the sea. But once Jonah had been cast into the sea, the sea became *calm* (Jonah 1:3-15). And Jonah had to remain*in the sea, in the place of death (typifying, as well, being scattered among the nations),* for two days, until the third day. *Only then* could Jonah be removed from the sea and be placed back in the land (Jonah 1:17-2:10).

Israel’s place out of the Lord’s will can only be in exactly the same place which Jonah occupied out of the Lord’s will — in the sea,*i.e., in the place of death and scattered among the nations.* This is the place where God dealt with Jonah in *the type,* and this is the place where God has decreed that He will deal with Israel in *the antitype.*

And Israel, as Jonah, has to remain in this place and condition (*in the sea — in the place of death, scattered among the nations) UNTIL the third day.* Any attempt by either Israel or others to bring about a change in *the timing of Israel’s return* or *the nation’s present condition and situation* is not only *doomed to failure* but is also *destined to make matters worse than they previously existed.*

An attempt has been made *to remove Israel from the sea, through humanistic means*, *BEFORE the time, ON the second day.* An attempt has been made, through Zionistic endeavors, *to reenter an “empty, swept, and garnished” house.*And this, in itself, will reveal *the ONLY possible future for the present existing nation of Israel in the Middle East.*

What is going to happen according to Jonah? *The sea is going to rage; the Gentile nations are going to be in turmoil.*And this scene from the Book of Jonah will address the whole of what is happening in the world today in relation to Israel and the Gentile nations.

What is going to happen according to Matthew? *EXACTLY the same thing! Conditions will ONLY become worse for Israel; and the Gentile nations, inseparably linked to Israel’s destiny in this respect, will fare no better.*

And that’s where the world presently finds itself.
*EVERYTHING is unalterably tied to Israel and that which Scripture reveals about the nation’s destiny.* Israel finds herself *in dire straits,* the Gentile nations surrounding Israel are *in turmoil,* and an eluding Middle East peace *is desperately being sought* at practically any price.
*Peace* though will not be forthcoming, and conditions will only become *worse*as time goes on. The man of sin, who will shortly appear and seemingly have the solution to the problem, will*fail;* and matters will become even *worse.* In fact, the whole of man’s efforts will end with *the darkest time* in Jewish history, immediately before *“the Sun [Son] of Righteousness”* arises “with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:1, 2).
In the middle of the Tribulation, the Jews presently in the land comprising the present nation of Israel are going to be uprooted. And those not escaping into surrounding Gentile nations will either “fall by the edge of the sword [be slain]” or “be led away captive into all nations” (Luke 21:20-24), with two-thirds of world Jewry (some 9,000,000 by today’s count) ultimately being slain (Zech. 13:8).
*ALL* of this is according to the clear revelation of Scripture; and, try as man might, *he is COMPLETELY powerless* to change the course of that which has been set in motion.
Scripture clearly reveals Israel’s destiny, not only during her ap- proaching darkest hour, but also during and following that time when the Jewish people cry out to the God of their fathers. Until the latter occurs, there can be nothing but *intensifying trouble;*but following the occurrence of the latter, the whole of *the matter will be reversed. Then, and ONLY then,*will *peace exist in the Middle East and the world at large.*
And all this foretold calamity is the setting for Christ’s departure from the house, His going down by the seaside, and His beginning to speak in parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.
*Israel’s climactic rejection*(Matt. 12) and *Christ’s subsequent action* *Christ’s subsequent action* 43), Christ’s condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees, and Christ’s announcement concerning the house being left desolate (Matt. 23:1-39).
And all of this anticipates the Church being called into existence (to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected), the entire present dispensation (in which the house lies desolate, while God calls out a bride for His Son), and the coming Tribulation (when Israel’s desolation will reach an apex, as the nation enters her darkest hour).
And, as well, all of this anticipates Israel ultimately returning to the One Who has torn and smitten, the only One Who can bind her wound. It will be *in that day ALONE*that healing will occur, with Israel then being raised up to live in God’s sight (Hosea 6:1, 2;*cf.*Isa. 1:4-2:5).

**Similarities Seen in Jewish History**

There are a number of parallels which can be seen through view - ing Israel during both the days of Moses and the days when Christ was on earth the first time.

*A theocracy* was in the offing in both instances, *a Magna Charta* for the kingdom was seen in both instances, there was *a climactic rejection* in both instances, and *the same consequences*followed in both instances.

*1) Moses’ Day*

During Moses’ day, the people were delivered from Egypt following the death of the firstborn, with a view to realizing the rights of the firstborn in an earthly land, separate from Egypt.

After their deliverance from Egypt, prior to entering the land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy — the constitution, the law, the rules and regulations governing the people — was given through Moses. Then the march was to Kadesh-Barnea, where the people of Israel were to enter the land, conquer the inhabitants, and rule the nations within this theocracy.

At Kadesh-Barnea, prior to the nation entering the land, twelve men — leaders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, one from each tribe — were chosen to enter the land first in order to derive information concerning the land and its inhabitants (Num. 13:1ff). These men traversed the land from one end to the other for forty days and nights, deriving this information. And they returned at the end of this time, not only with this information, but also with fruits from the land for the people to see (Num. 13:21ff).

Then, after all twelve of the Jewish leaders had delivered their report “to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel,” exhibiting the fruits of the land, they concluded with two diametrically opposed statements.

Two of the men concluded with *a positive statement,* but the remain- ing ten concluded with *a negative statement.* Two of the men delivered *a good report,* but the remaining ten delivered *an evil report*(Num. 13:26ff).

The two, Caleb and Joshua (with Caleb speaking for both), said:
“Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to over- come it” (Num. 13:30; *cf.*Num. 14:6).
But the remaining ten said: “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Num. 13:31).

And the people listened to and gave heed to the ten with *the evil report* rather than the two with *the good report.*
Unbelief on the part of Israel in this respect was *unbelief in God’s ability to see the matter through to its completion.*
Godhadsupernaturally deliveredHispeople fromEgypt andhad supernaturally provided for them thus far (Ex. 14:13-31; 16:1ff; 17:1ff).
And now He was to allow them to possess the land through su- pernaturally delivering those inhabiting the land (a land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) into their hands (Deut. 1:30; 4:38; 7:1, 2, 16, 22-24; 28:7).
But the people, through their unbelief, *stayed God’s delivering hand.*
And, because of this unbelief, Israel, at Kadesh-Barnea, *fell away* after such a fashion that a return to their former state was no longer possible. They had crossed over the line; they had committed a sin for which *there was NO sacrifice* (*cf.* Num. 15:30-36; Heb. 10:26, 27).
And because of this, the entire unbelieving generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was to be *overthrown in the wilderness* (Num. 14:29, 30). They were to be overthrown*on the RIGHT SIDE* of the blood (the death of the firstborn back in Egypt) but *on the WRONG SIDE* of the goal of their calling (entrance into the land to realize the rights of the firstborn).
After God had dealt with the ten leaders who delivered *an evil report* to the people (Num. 14:37), the entire unbelieving generation was progressively overthrown during the next thirty-eight and onehalf years. Those comprising this generation were led away from the promised land, into the wilderness land of Esau and Lot, down by the sea; and this entire unbelieving generation died in this wilderness land (Deut. 2:1-14).
And there was *NOTHING*any one of them could do about it. They were *completely, totally powerless* to bring about a change. They had fallen away at Kadesh-Barnea after a fashion which made a return to their former state *impossible.*

*2) Christ’s Day*

During Christ’s day, exactly the same thing can be seen, though from a different perspective. The death of the firstborn was past (the people of Israel were still sacrificing the paschal lamb year after year [though they were about to slay the Paschal Lamb, presenting the beginning of a different series of events which would be culminated at the time of Christ’s return]).

*BUT* , rather than deliverance from one *earthly land* to another, as during Moses’s day, deliverance from the earth to *a heavenly land* was in view. *THEN*, with a view to the Jewish people entering this heavenly land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy (again, the constitution, the law, the rules and regulations governing the people) was given through Christ.

*THIS is what the message Christ delivered on the Mount in Matt. 5-7 was about.*
And, though the message surrounding the kingdom had previously been proclaimed to Israel (Matt. 3, 4), *ONLY after the Magna Charta for the kingdom had been delivered (Matt. 5-7) could the FULL force of the offer come into view (Matt. 8ff)*.
But the religious leaders in Israel led an unbelieving generation to do exactly the same thing which the leadership in Israel had led the people to do during Moses’ day. These religious leaders had *NO interest in entering the kingdom, and they did EVERYTHING within their power to see that those comprising the remainder of the nation didn’t enter either* (Matt. 23:13).
They had heard the report (from John, Jesus, and the Twelve), and they had seen the fruits of the land (the various signs being manifested, showing that which Israel could have if the nation would repent). *But they wanted nothing to do with the matter.* And Israel’s religious leaders, exactly as had been done during Moses’ day, presented *an evil report,* leading the nation into a rejection *from which there could be NO return.*
Events of Num. 13, 14 and Matt. 12 (*ref.* Chapter I in this book) parallel one another in this respect. Both have to do with *climactic points of rejection, with a theocracy in view;*and both present the nation, *because of its leadership,*being brought to *a point of no return.*
After they had been brought to this place, only one thing lay in store for both generations: *an overthrow, on the RIGHT SIDE of the blood, but on the WRONG SIDE of the goal of their calling.*

**A Similarity Seen in Christendom**

In Christendom, things are little different concerning the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ. Not only is the message being rejected, but Christians, as the Israelites during both Moses’ day and Christ’s day, can reach a terminal point in their rejection. That’s what the third of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews is about.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,
And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [‘age’] to come,
If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; see- ing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

This section in Hebrews warns against a falling away after such a fashion that, once the individual has fallen away, he will be unable to find *a place of repentance.* And, contextually, the warning is drawn from the type seen in the previous warning — the Israelites under Moses (chs. 3, 4).

Under Moses, the Israelites fell away at Kadesh-Barnea after they had heard the report of the Twelve and had seen the fruits of the land. Their falling away had to do with *a rejection* of that which lay before them; and once they had fallen away, *NO place of repentance* could then be found.

“Repentance” simply means *a change of mind.* And the thought has nothing to do with the Israelites changing their minds. This is something which they did the very next day, but to no avail (Num. 14:39-45). They changed their minds and sought to go into the land set before them and conquer the inhabitants in accordance with God’s previous command. But, because of their previous unbelief upon hearing the report of the Twelve and seeing the fruits of the land, God had already told them that they would not be allowed to do that which they were now attempting to do. Instead, the entire unbelieving generation was destined to be *overthrown in the wilderness.*

The *repentance*in view in the type was on the part of God, not on the part of the Israelites. God, because of that which had occurred, was not going to change His mind. And there was *NOTHING*which the Israelites could do to alter the existing situation.

The matter would be similar to Esau’s forfeiture of his birthright and that which occurred following Isaac bestowing the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob. Esau, realizing for the first time *the value of the birthright* and realizing *the gravity of that which had occurred,* sought to get his father, Isaac, to bless him as well. But Isaac couldn’t now bless Esau after this manner. He had already bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob, and *the matter could NOT be reversed.*

Esau’s forfeiture of his birthright constitutes the fifth and last of the five major warnings in Hebrews. And this warning concludes by stating that Esau “found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb. 12:16, 17).

Esau repented; he changed his mind. But Esau couldn’t get his father to repent; he couldn’t get his father to change his mind. Isaac *COULDN’T*change his mind. It was *too late.* He had already bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob. And, realizing not only *the gravity of the situation* but *the finality of the matter,* it is recorded that “Esau lifted up his voice, and wept” (Gen. 27:34-38).

Though the forfeiture of one’s birthright would be in view in the third warning in Hebrews, as well as the fifth warning, the third warning is drawn from the experiences of the Israelites at KadeshBarnea under Moses. And this is the point in Scripture where one must center his attention if he is to properly understand this warning.

A falling away in the antitype would require that an individual not only first hear the message but that he also have some understanding of the subject. It would require Christians to be placed in exactly the same position as the Israelites under Moses, who both heard the report and saw the fruits of the land.

Note how Heb. 6:4, 5 is worded, keeping in mind that the matter has to do with “the powers of the world to come [‘the age to come,’ the Messianic Era]” (v. 5b):

The individuals in this passage had been “enlightened,” they had “tasted of the heavenly gift,” they had been made “partakers [‘companions’] of the Holy Spirit [note that the primary function of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the world today is the search for the bride (Gen. 24)],” and they had “tasted the good word of God.”

All of these things have to do with *that which is in view in the type.* All of these things have to do with*entrance into the land and realizing the rights of the firstborn therein.*

And a person finding himself in this position, then falling away in the antitype of the Israelites falling away at Kadesh-Barnea (turning from, rejecting that set before him), will find himself in *EXACTLY the same position* as the unbelieving generation under Moses found itself. He will find himself in *a position where it will be IMPOSSIBLE to be renewed again unto repentance.*

*God DIDN’T change His mind* relative to an unbelieving generation during Moses’ day, *He DIDN’T change His mind* relative to an unbeliev- ing generation when Christ was on earth the first time, and *He is NOT going to change His mind relative to unbelieving Christians. God’s people DIDN’T then, NOR will they today or yet future, find a place of repentance.*

**But God Honors Faithfulness**

During Moses’ day, Caleb and Joshua were set apart from the un - believing generation. They had believed the Lord, and God honored their belief. They were subsequently allowed *to enter the land, conquer the inhabitants, and realize the goal of their calling.*

Caleb and Joshua form a type of faithful Christians (in the same fashion that the unbelieving generation of that day forms a type of unfaithful Christians). And God will honor faithfulness among Christians today, exactly as He honored faithfulness during Moses’ day.

*Faithful Christians will be dealt with in a parallel fashion to the way God dealt with Caleb and Joshua.*
Following the crossing of Jordan, the conquest of Jericho, and numerous subsequent battles, Caleb realized his inheritance. And upon realizing his inheritance, Caleb said:

“Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.
And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God.

And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said… Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day…” (Josh. 14:7-10a, 12a).

Joshua then blessed Caleb and gave him “Hebron for an inheri - tance” (vv. 13, 14).
Then Joshua’s inheritance in the land is spoken of at a later time, after the land had been divided and things had been put in order:

“When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them.

According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein” (Josh. 19:49, 50; *cf.* Luke 19:15-18).

And therein lies the difference between *faithfulness* and *unfaithfulness* to that which God had commanded during Moses’ day, which would be *exactly the same* for Christians in the antitype. It was/is *being allowed to realize an inheritance* in a land flowing with milk and honey on the one hand, or it was/is *being overthrown* in the land of Esau and Lot on the other.

*ONE thing ALONE is seen as the deciding factor.*
This *one thing*was stated by Calebbefore he realized his inheritance, something *upon which he based the whole of his claim to the inheritance:*
“I wholly followed the Lord my God” (Josh. 14:8b; *cf.* v 9).

And this *ONE thing* was stated again following Caleb realizing his inheritance, showing *the WHOLE of that upon which the reward of the inheritance was based:*

“Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb…because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel” (Josh. 14:14).

3

Parable of the Sower

***Sowing, Fruit-Bearing, the Kingdom in View***

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:
And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them:
But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some, sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 13:3-9).

The parable of the Sower, the first of four parables which Christ gave outside the house, by the seaside, is comprised of four parts. Each part has to do with *EXACTLY the same thing: fruit-bearing, with the kingdom of the heavens in view* — a kingdom about to be offered (during the future time covered by this parable) to a people other than Israel (to *the new creation* “in Christ,” about to be brought into existence).

Israel — the nation to whom the kingdom of the heavens was still being offered at the time Christ gave the parable of the Sower, outside “the house” (referencing *the house of Israel, left desolate in the previous chapter*), by “the seaside” (referencing *the Gentiles*) — is subsequently represented in Matthew’s gospel by *a barren fig tree*(Matt. 21:18, 19; *cf.*Joel 1:7).

The tree had leaves, but *NO fruit.*And, because of the fruitless condition of the tree (representing the fruitless condition of Israel),

29 Christ pronounced a curse on the tree. He said, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever [*lit.* ‘henceforward with respect to the age’].” And the fig tree, by the next day, had “withered away,” show- ing that which was about to happen to the nation of Israel (vv. 19, 20; *cf.* Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21).

The parable of the Sower *looks out ahead to God’s activity during an entirely separate dispensation,* following the removal of the kingdom from Israel and a new nation being brought forth to bear fruit (Matt. 21:33-43).

Israel, because of the nation’s barren condition, was to be set aside for a dispensation; and, throughout the dispensation, God would deal with *a different nation with respect to fruit-bearing and the kingdom of the heavens.*

This is that “holy nation,” a “peculiar people” to which Peter referred, who “in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (I Peter 2:9, 10). This is *the new creation*“in Christ,” taken from both of the former two creations (both Jew and Gentile [but mainly *Gentile*, shown by “the seaside”]), though neither of the former two creations (neither Jew nor Gentile) exists within this new creation (Eph. 2:12-15).

“In Christ,” all distinctions of the human race seen in both of the former two creations (in both Jew and Gentile) simply do not exist (Gal. 3:26-29). *The new creation* “in Christ” is exactly what the name implies — *an entirely new creation in the human race* (II Cor. 5:17). This is why Scripture, following this time, divides the human race into three separate and distinct segments:

“Give none offence, neither to *the Jews,* nor to *the Gentiles,* nor to *the church of God”* (I Cor. 10:32).

The parable of the Sower was given with a view to this new creation not only being brought into existence but also being extended the opportunity to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. The parable of the Sower looks out ahead to that time when the kingdom would be taken from Israel (because of the nation’s failure to produce fruit) and given to a nation which would produce “the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43).

Inthefirst threepartsoftheparablethough,individualscomprising *the one new man* fail to bring forth fruit, as those in Israel had done relative to the proffered kingdom. Rather than overcoming and bearing fruit, they are instead overcome (through various means) and bear no fruit.

But in the last part of the parable, *THAT expected of the one new man during the present dispensation is shown. Unlike barren Israel, overcoming* and *fruit-bearing* are seen.

Thus, it is revealed at the beginning, before God even brought this new creation into existence, *that NOT all those comprising the one new man — NOT all Christians — would bring forth fruit.*

*Fruit-bearing is seen in ONLY one part of the parable, in the last part. In the first three parts, individuals are shown to have been overcome through various means, resulting in barrenness.*

*ALL* of these things are set forth in the parable itself. But, after responding to the disciples’ question concerning why He was speaking to the multitudes in parables (vv. 10-17; *ref.*Ch. I in this book), *Christ provided them with interpretative help to further explain the parable of the Sower (vv. 18-23). Christ went back over the four parts, briefly explaining each part.*

(The reason Christ provided additional interpretative help for the parable of the Sower is obvious. This parable is *foundational* to the other six which Christ subsequently gave. Correctly understanding the six parables which followed *would be contingent on correctly understanding the introductory parable.*

A properly laid foundation will allow one to properly build. But, lay the foundation improperly, and the inverse of that will be equally true.)

Then, after giving both the parable of the Sower and interpretative help, Christ gave the second, third, and fourth parables, apart from any explanation (vv. 24-33). But, after going back inside the house, Christ, responding to another question asked by the disciples, concerning the second parable, provided additional interpretative help for this parable as well (vv. 36-43). And, once back inside the house, Christ then gave the fifth, sixth, and seventh parables (vv. 44-48), providing a very brief explanation concerning several things in the seventh and closing parable (vv. 49, 50).

*ALL* seven parables have to do *with a people other than Israel (v. 1; ref. Ch. I in this book), with the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens (v. 11), with the Word of the Kingdom (vv. 19-23), and with fruit-bearing (vv. 8, 23).*

*ALL* seven parables, accordingly, have to do with *the gospel of the glory of Christ, NOT the gospel of the grace of God. And they have to do with those to whom the kingdom is being offered during the present dispensation, following Israel’s rejection and the kingdom being taken from the nation*.

Thus, *ALL seven parables have to do with a time following the rejection of the kingdom by Israel and the removal of the kingdom from Israel.*
And, accordingly, they have to do with *the new entity, the new creation, called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected.*
And further, though Christ reentered the house prior to giving the last three parables, there is *no change* in the identity of those in view, those being dealt with. *The Church continues center-stage.*
The last three parables depict God’s summary dealings with respect to two things:

1) *His previous dealings with Christians* (throughout the dispensation and at the judgment seat).
2) *His future redemptive action* (redemption of the inheritance, resulting in the marriage of Christ to His bride [a bride previ- ously singled out and revealed at the judgment seat]) and *the subsequent separation of Christians* (immediately preceding and leading into the Messianic Era, based on previous decisions and determinations at the judgment seat).

(Different facets of the preceding are dealt with throughout this book, in material covering all seven parables.)

Whether dealing with the parable of the Sower, the parable of the wheat and tares, or any of the other parables, the message of salvation by grace through faith is simply *NOT in view. Rather, fruit-bearing, with respect to the kingdom, is in view.* These parables have to do with God’s complete dealings with an entirely new creation, about to be called into existence to bear fruit where Israel had failed.

Since this is the case, there is really *NOTHING*in the parables which has to do with the unsaved, their eternal destiny, etc.
*EVERYTHING has to do solely with the saved*, with a view to the Messianic Era, when Christ will sit on His throne in the heavenly Jerusalem and co-heirs will exercise power with Him.
*EVERYTHING* — the four divisions in the first parable, the two di- visions in the second parable, an unnatural growth in the third parable, the whole becoming leavened in the fourth parable, redemption of the inheritance and marriage in the fifth and sixth parables, and the separation of the good and bad in the seventh parable — *has to do with the saved alone.*

**Manner of Sowing**

“The Sower” in the parable (the Greek text has a definite article before “Sower” — *a particular Sower*) is identified in the explanation to the second parable as *the Son of Man, a Messianic title* (v. 37; *cf.* Ps. 8:4-6; Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 16:13-16).

And also, in this explanation, the place where the sowing occurs is revealed to be *in the field, in the world* (v. 38). In the parable itself, this sowing occurs different places in the field, different places in the world.

And that which the Sower — the Son of Man, Christ — sows out in the world is revealed to be *individuals,* not “seeds” per se (note that the word “seeds” in the text is in italics [v. 4], indicating that it is not in the Greek text, but supplied by the translators).

In the second parable though, there *is* a sowing of “seed.” “Good seed” (vv. 24, 27) are sown by Christ in the field (which is really the same sowing seen in the first parable), but these “good seed” repre- sent individuals. They are identified as “the children [‘sons’] of the kingdom” in the explanation (v. 38).

Thus, there is no problem retaining the word “seeds” in the English text of the parable of the Sower as long as it is understood that these “seeds” represent individuals. This is not only in line with the second parable but also in line with the correct rendering of four different verses in the explanation to the four parts of the first parable as well.

The latter part of verse nineteen, explaining the sowing in the first of the four parts of the parable (v. 4), should read, “This is he which was sown by the wayside.”

The beginning of verse twenty, explaining the sowing in the second of the four parts of the parable (vv. 5, 6), should read, “But he that was sown into stony places…”

The beginning of verse twenty-two, explaining the sowing in the third of the four parts of the parable (v. 7), should read, “He also that was sown among the thorns…”

And the beginning of verse twenty-three, explaining the last of the four parts of the parable (v. 8), should read, “But he that was sown into the good ground…”

The Sower (the Lord Jesus Christ) has sown individuals (Chris - tians) different places in the world, with a view to *ONE thing* — *fruitbearing.*And this fruit-bearing has to do with *ONE thing* as well — *the kingdom of the heavens.*

(In Mark’s and Luke’s accounts of the parable of the Sower [Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:4-15], both *the Word* [the Word of the Kingdom, as seen in Matthew’s account] and *individuals* [as also seen in Matthew’s account] are sown different places out in the world, with a view to *fruit-bearing*[as seen in Matthew’s account as well].

There is, of course, no conflict in *the Word* being sown and *individuals* being sown, for the Word cannot be sown apart from a saved individual [in Luke’s account, “seed” is sown (v. 5), but this “seed” is identified as *the Word* (v. 11)]. The Word is actually sown within the individual who has been sown. He hears, receives the Word [Matt. 13:19-23; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15].

The whole of the matter is described different ways in the three different accounts, presenting one complete, composite picture of that occurring within Christendom during the present dispensation.)

Understanding this is *foundational* if one would properly understand that which should be the central focus of all activity in the lives of Christians in the world today. And, understanding this is *foundational* as well if one would properly understand that which is the central focus of all activity surrounding the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world today — the search for the bride (Gen. 24; *cf.* chs. 23-25).

Activity in the lives of Christians and activity in the ministry of the Spirit go hand-in-hand in this respect. They, of necessity, *MUST.*
The gospel of the grace of God though, as it has to do with both those sown in the field and the present work of the Spirit, is another matter entirely. An individual *MUST* pass “from death unto life” before he can be extended the opportunity, find himself in a position, to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. He *MUST* become a child of the Owner before he can possess any association with the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs (John 5:24; Rom. 8:17; Eph. 2:1-5).
Thus, unsaved man *MUST* first hear the gospel of the grace of God (from those sown in the field). And the work of the Spirit *MUST*, correspondingly, begin at this point (as seen in the foundational pattern in Gen. 1:2b-5). Unsaved man *MUST* pass “from death unto life” before he can be dealt with relative to the inheritance out ahead.
And the Spirit of God is in the world today, *FIRST of all*, to do a work in unsaved man in this respect. He is present in the world to breath life into the one who is without life, effecting *spiritual life* in that individual (*cf.* Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37:1-10; John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5, 8).
*ONLY then* can the Spirit deal with man in relation to that which is seen in the parable of the Sower, or any of the other six parables in this chapter. And *ONLY then* can the Spirit, as well, bring to completion the central purpose for His presence in the world today — to search for, find, and remove the bride for God’s Son (Gen. 24:33, 36, 58-67).

**Places Where Sown**

The explanation to the parable of the Sower begins with the statement, “When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom…” (v. 19a). Then, in each of the four parts to the explanation, the expression is shortened to simply, “the word” — referring to the previously mentioned Word, “the word of the kingdom” (vv. 20-23).

This is a reference to a message surrounding *the SAME kingdom which was being offered to Israel* (Matt. 3-12). And the reference is set within a context having to do with a message surrounding this kingdom being offered *to a people OTHER THAN Israel.*

It is simply called “the word of the kingdom” in the explanation to the parable of the Sower, *for it would be completely obvious from both the text and context EXACTLY what message was being referenced.*

The message in view is *EXACTLY what the text states*, and it could hardly be stated any plainer. The message has to do with *the kingdom, NOT with salvation by grace through faith.* And the response of different individuals throughout the parable has to do with *the kingdom* as well, *NOT with eternal verities seen in the gospel of the grace of God.*

*EVERYTHING in the parable of the Sower revolves around two things:*

*1) The Word of the kingdom.
2) Fruit-bearing, or barrenness,* on the part of those hearing this message.

To read salvation by grace through faith into this passage, as so many individuals do, both *corrupts* and *destroys.*It *corrupts* one facet of the good news, the gospel of the grace of God, by bringing things over into this gospel which do not belong there; and it *destroys* the other facet of the good news, the gospel of the glory of Christ, by removing things having to do with this gospel through misapplying them elsewhere.

*1) Ones Sown by the Wayside*

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 4, 19), the ones sown by the wayside represent individuals (Christians) who hear the Word of the Kingdom but fail to understand the message. And their failure to understand the message allows the “fowls,” representing “the wicked one [Satan],” to simply come along and *do away* with the message, thus *devouring* the person (*cf.* vv. 4, 19; I Peter 5:6-9).

Those sown by the wayside, having this type experience in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, would probably represent the majority of Christians hearing this message today. Though they have a capacity to understand the message (they possess spiritual life), they show little to no interest, allowing Satan to perform his *destroying* and *devouring* work.

In Israel, when Christ was on earth the first time, the religious leaders had misled the people (Matt. 12:9-32; 15:1ff; 16:1ff; 23:13, 15). And, as a result, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the actions of the Israelites of that day:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed…” (Matt. 13:15a; *cf.* Isa. 6:9, 10).

The Jewish people were not only in possession of the written Word of God but were also capable of spiritual perception. They were perfectly capable of understanding this Word. But the religious leaders in Israel (centrally, fundamental religious leaders — the Pharisees) had misled the people. Resultingly, when the Jewish people heard the message, their reaction was no different than the reaction of those described in the first part of the parable of the Sower.

Thus, the whole of the matter, seen almost two millenniums ago in Israel, is exactly the same as that which can be seen in Christendom today. *The religious leaders misled the people then, and the religious leaders are misleading the people today.* And this is something which can be seen mainly in so-called fundamental circles (the liberals are so far removed from reality insofar as sound Biblical doctrine is concerned that they seldom even fit into the matter).

The final state of Christendom during the dispensation — seen in both the chronology of the first four parables in Matt. 13 and the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3 — is *complete corruption and rejection* in relation to the Word of the Kingdom. That is, insofar as this message is concerned (the message seen throughout the parable of the Sower), *the whole of Christendom* (fundamental and liberal segments alike) will be as the Church in Laodicea at the end of the dispensation, *completely leavened* (*cf.* Matt. 13:33; Rev. 3:14-20).

Those in the Laodicean Church, as those in Israel at Christ’s first coming, are seen in possession of the Word of God and capable of spiritual perception. But those in this Church are also seen in exactly the same condition as those in Israel, described in Isaiah’s prophecy:

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17).

Israel, in the nation’s blinded condition, didn’t heed the message; and the Church in its blinded condition is not going to heed the message either.

But a number of individuals in Israel did heed the message, and their eyes were opened (*cf.* Matt. 13:15b, 16; Luke 24:16, 31). And a number of individuals in Christendom too have heeded and continue to heed the message, and their eyes too have been/are being opened (*cf.* II Cor. 3:14-18; Rev. 3:18).

*2) Ones Sown into Stony Places*

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 5, 6, 20, 21), the ones sown into stony places represent individuals who hear the Word, understand the Word, and receive it joyfully. These are individuals who get excited about that which they have heard and learned. There is *new-found joy and excitement in their lives, because of “the word of the kingdom”* (v. 20).

*BUT* , before they can become sufficiently grounded in this Word (they have no “deepness of earth,” they have no “root”), “tribulation or persecution” takes its toll. They endure “for awhile”; but, in the symbolism of the parable, when “the sun [‘tribulation or persecution’]” begins to beat down in all its strength, because of their lack of root (maturity in the faith), *they wither away*(vv. 5, 6, 21).

In the text, “tribulation or persecution” occurs “because of the word,” because of individuals hearing and receiving *the Word of the Kingdom.*

*This in the ONE MESSAGE in Scripture, unlike ANY OTHER message, which will cause Satan to marshal his forces.
The reason: This message centers around A CHANGE in the government of the earth.*
Satan and his angels presently rule over the earth, within the existing kingdom of the heavens; but a new order of Rulers is about to be brought forth — Christ and His co-heirs. Satan and his angels are to be put down, with Christ and His co-heirs then taking the kingdom.
The Word of the Kingdom is a message which has *this end*in view. It is a message having to do with *Christ ruling the earth* in that coming day, ruling in the stead of Satan; and it is a message having to do with *Christians occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ*in that day, ruling in the stead of angels presently ruling with Satan.
And this is something which Satan will do *EVERYTHING within his power* to prevent. Thus, one could only expect a message dealing centrally with this subject to come under attack *as NO OTHER message, which is EXACTLY the way Scripture presents the matter.*
In Eph. 3:1-11 this message is seen as something presently being made known “by [*lit.,*‘through’] the Church” to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places [Satan and his angels]” (v. 10). The message being made known has to do with the fact that Satan and his angels are about to be replaced, and it has to do with individuals presently responding in a positive manner to the invitation (being extended by the Holy Spirit in the world) to have a part with Christ, in His administration, in that coming day (*cf.* Gen. 24:36, 58).
And in Eph. 6:10ff a spiritual warfare is seen raging because of that which is presently being made known through the Church to Satan and his angels.
Satan will, first of all, do everything within his power *to prevent* Christians from hearing this message; and, should Christians hear this message, he will then do everything within his power *to do away with, destroy* this message, *devouring* Christians.
At this point, Satan brings about “tribulation or persecution” in the life of the one hearing and understanding the message. And note again the wording of the text. Tribulation or persecution arises in the life of such an individual “because of the word,” *because of the Word of the Kingdom.*
He has heard and joyfully received this Word. And this tribula- tion or persecution invariably comes from *other Christians.*
Unsaved man out in the world *can have nothing to do with all of this.* He is “dead in trespasses and sins,” *completely incapable of operating in the spiritual realm.* And not only does this tribulation or persecution come from other Christians, but many times it comes more specifically from those in positions of *leadership,* exactly as in Israel when this offer was open to the nation almost two millenniums ago (*e.g.,*John 9:22).
The person, through this tribulation or persecution, is “offended [Gk., *skandalizo,* ‘scandalized’]” (v. 21). That which he has heard, understood, and accepted is associated with error, cultism, etc. And, because of his lack of maturity in the faith, he is overcome. He simply gives up; he quits; he falls away. And Satan wins the victory in his life.

*3) Ones Sown Among Thorns*

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 7, 22), the ones sown among thorns represent individuals who hear the Word, but, because of worldly involvement, they bear no fruit. They “go forth” (Luke 8:14), apparently enduring for awhile, but are then overcome by the enemy.

That used to bring about their fall is revealed to be “the care of this world [‘age’], and the deceitfulness of riches.” Then Luke, in his account of this parable, adds a third — the “pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14).

These individuals — whether through immaturity, neglect, letting their guard down, or any number of other things (we’re simply not told) — allow various things within the present world system, under Satan, to bring about their fall (*cf.* I John 2:15-17). Satan uses these things against them in the spiritual warfare.

They fail to heed the Lord’s admonition and warning concerning where Christians are to fix their attention and keep it fixed. Chris- tians, in the race of the faith, are to look “unto Jesus [*lit.,* ‘from, unto Jesus’]” (Heb. 12:1, 2). They are to look “from” the things of this present world system “unto” Jesus. *They are not to look back; they are not to look around; but they are to keep their eyes fixed straight out ahead, on Christ, on the Author and Finisher of their faith.*

And Christians are not only to fix their attention on Jesus, but also on exactly the same thing Christ fixed His attention as He endured the sufferings and shame surrounding Calvary. Christ fixed His at- tention on “the joy that was set before him” as He “endured the cross, despising the shame [considering the sufferings and shame *of little consequence*compared to His coming glory and exaltation]” (Heb. 12:2; *cf.* Matt. 25:21, 23; I Peter 2:21).

Christians are to “escape to the mountain [‘the mountain,’ sig - nifying *the kingdom*],” *apart from looking back, apart from remaining in the plain*(“the plain,” signifying*the present world system*). And if they don’t, they will be consumed along with the things in the plain (Gen. 19:17; *cf.* Gen. 19:26; Luke 9:62; 17:32, 33).

Christians are to fix their attention on *the King and His Kingdom* — not looking back, not looking around — considering present sufferings (tribulation or persecution), or the things of this world (care of this age, riches, pleasures of life), *of little consequence* compared to the proffered glory and exaltation lying ahead. And *if they don’t,* Satan will use one or all of these things in his unceasing efforts to bring about their fall.

*4) Ones Sown into Good Ground*

The fourth part of the parable presents matters after an entirely different fashion. Those sown “into good ground” (vv. 8, 23) represent individuals *who hear the Word*(first part of the parable); *they understand the Word*and refuse to allow “tribulation or persecution” to deter them as they progress toward maturity in the Word (second part of the parable); and*they keep their eyes fixed on the goal out ahead*, rather than on the things of this present world system (third part of the parable).

They hear, understand, and grow in the Word ( *cf.* Acts 20:32; James 1:21; I Peter 2:2). Tribulation or persecution doesn’t stop them; and they do not allow themselves to become sidetracked by the “care of this age,” the “deceitfulness of riches,” or the “pleasures of life.” These are individuals who refuse to become entangled “with the affairs of this life,” knowing that a crown lies out ahead *for those who “strive lawfully”* (II Tim. 2:4, 5).

Thus, these are individuals who overcome and bring forth fruit. These are individuals who overcome *the world* (I John 5:4), *the flesh* (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5), and *the Devil* (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9), rather than being overcome by one or all three. And, as a result, they bring forth fruit. They are the only ones who do bring forth fruit among the four groups mentioned, and they bring forth fruit in varying amounts — “some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

These individuals are the only ones who fulfill the purpose for their very existence — bringing forth fruit where Israel had failed, qualifying them to occupy positions with Christ in the coming kingdom of the heavens. These are the ones who will be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ in that coming day, occupying positions *EXACTLY commensurate with their fruit-bearing.*

**Outcome of Sowing**

Positions in the coming kingdom of Christ are to be earned, not passed out in any type indiscriminate manner (Matt. 20:21-23). Individuals appearing before Christ in that day will receive *EXACTLY what each, through fruit-bearing, has earned.* Each will receive “his own reward according to his own labor” (I Cor. 3:8).

(The word translated “reward” in the N.T. is from the Greek word *misthos*[*misthapodosia,*a cognate word, in Hebrews], which has to do with “payment,“ or “wages” for services rendered. And it will be *EXACT.* The payment will be *EXACTLY commensurate with services rendered.*)

Individuals bringing forth no fruit will receive no payment. There will have been no fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will not be forthcoming. Instead, they will “suffer loss” (I Cor. 3:15).

On the other hand, individuals bringing forth fruit will receive payment. There will have been fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will be forthcoming. Each will “receive a reward” (I Cor. 3:14). There will be “a just recompense of reward [‘a just payment, justly earned wages’]” (Heb. 2:2; 11:26).
Mention is made in the parable of the Sower of individuals bringing forth fruit in varying amounts — “some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold” (vv. 8, 23). And payment for the varying amounts, seen in another parable, the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11-27, would be *EXACTLY commensurate* with their individual fruitfulness.

In the parable of the pounds, ten servants were each given one pound. Each was given a portion of his Lord’s business to use during the time of his Lord’s absence, in order that he might be accorded the opportunity to bring forth an increase.

One servant brought forth a tenfold increase; and the Lord, upon His return, gave him authority over ten cities. Another servant brought forth a fivefold increase; and the Lord, at this time, gave him author- ity over five cities. But a third servant failed to use that entrusted to him, and he was not only denied governmental authority but he was also severely rebuked by his Lord.

This is not only the way Scripture plainly presents the matter, but this is also what God’s perfect justice and righteousness demands. If matters occurred any other way, God would not be perfectly just and righteous in His judgmental dealings with His servants to whom He entrusted His business during His time of absence.

(God’s future judgmental dealings with His servants, *providing EXACT payment for services rendered,* will be *in complete keeping* with the unchangeable laws of the harvest, which He Himself established:

*1. A person ALWAYS reaps what he sows.*

The one sowing “to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corrup - tion,” and the one sowing “to his Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting [Gk., *aionios* life, referring, in the text, to ‘life in the coming age’ (Gal. 6:7, 8; *cf.* Gen. 1:11)].”

*2. A person ALWAYS reaps more than he sows.* Sow “the wind” and one can only expect to reap “the whirlwind” [Hosea 8:7], but remain faithful over “a few things,” and one will be made “ruler over many things” [Matt. 25:21, 23].

*3. And there is a PERIOD of TIME between the sowing and the reaping.* One sows during the present dispensation; but the reaping, whether good or bad, dependent wholly on the sowing, awaits the coming dispensation.)

4

Parable of the Wheat, Tares

***Satan Sowing Tares, to Stop Fruit-Bearing***

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.
But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.
So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?
He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?
But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.
Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt. 13:24-30).

The parable of the wheat and tares continues with the same subject matter introduced in the previous parable, the parable of the Sower. The central focus in the parable of the Sower was *fruit-bearing;* and different things were presented which, on the one hand, *prevented*

43 *fruit-bearing* (vv. 4-7, 19-22), or, on the other hand, *resulted in fruitbearing* (vv. 8, 23).

And the central focus in the parable of the wheat and tares, as well, centers around *fruit-bearing* (v. 26). But this parable does not cover fruit-bearing from the same broad spectrum seen in the previous parable. Rather, continuing the thought from the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares limits itself *to ONE realm.* It limits itself *to that part of the parable of the Sower which deals with the ones sown into the good ground, who brought forth fruit* (*cf.* vv. 8, 23, 24, 26).

Those failing to bring forth fruit in the first three parts of the previ - ous parable *CANNOT be viewed as “good seed” in this parable.*
That is to say, *ALL* of the “good seed” — “wheat,” “sons of the kingdom” — in the parable of the wheat and tares are seen bringing forth fruit (*cf.* vv. 24, 26, 37, 38, 40-43). This is simply a continuation and elaboration of the fourth and last part of the previous parable.
Then something *NEW* is introduced. The parable of the wheat and tares centers around those bearing fruit from the previous parable in order to reveal something additional, something not revealed in the parable of the Sower.
Thus, the parable of the wheat and tares moves *a step beyond that revealed at the end of the previous parable*, the parable of the Sower.
This second parable continues with the same thought but then reveals *a concentrated attack against those individuals bearing fruit.* It reveals *the EXACT method* which Satan uses as he goes about seeking *TO STOP that which is occurring.*
Satan seeks *to PREVENT fruit-bearing* through a number of means (revealed in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower). And, throughout the dispensation he has been successful in his confrontation with the vast majority of Christians. He has succeeded in preventing most from bearing fruit.
*But the preceding has NOT been true of ALL Christians.*
Some Christians have been victorious over Satan’s methods and schemes. They have overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, as a result, they have brought forth and continue to bring forth fruit. And it is these Christians, the ones bearing fruit, that Satan is seen directing his attack against in the parable of the wheat and tares, seeking *to STOP that which is occurring.*

**The Kingdom of the Heavens Is Likened unto…**

The parable of the wheat andtaresandthe subsequent five parables begin after a similar fashion: “The kingdom of the heavens is likened [or, ‘is like’] unto…” (*cf.* vv. 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47).

This though is in the English translation (KJV). The Greek text, in its wording, reveals Christ sharply distinguishing between the way in which He began the parable of the wheat and tares and the way in which He began each of the remaining five parables.

*1) Has Become Like, Is Like*

The expression in question, in the English text, reads, “is likened” in the second parable and “is like” in the remaining five. Thus, the English text does not show a distinction between the way in which any of the six parables are introduced.

The word translated “likened” or “like” in the Greek text is the same in each instance (*homoioo* [a verb] or *homoios*[a noun]). Introducing the parable of the wheat and tares, the verb form of this word is used (*homoioo*); and introducing the remaining five parables, the noun form of this word is used (*homoios*), with a verb following. And the structure of the noun and verb in each of these five remaining parables is identical.

*Homoioo* and *homoios* are used in the Greek New Testament to show a likeness between different things, or to compare one thing with another. For example, “This is like…” Our English word, “homo” (like), prefixed to numerous English words, comes from the Greek prefix forming these two words. Thus, the words “likened” or “like” in the English translation accurately convey the meaning of *homoioo* or *homoios.*

But, moving fromthe secondparable to the remaining five parables, the English text does not properly convey the manner in which these five parables are introduced. The problem lies, not in the meaning of the words (*homoioo* or *homoios*), but in the translator’s failure to show the distinction which Christ made when He used these words after entirely different fashions. That is, Christ used the verb form of this word to convey one thing in the parable of the wheat and tares. But continuing with the subsequent parables he used the noun form to convey something quite different.

The verb, *homoioo,* is used introducing the parable of the wheat and tares after a manner which should be translated, “it has become like.” Accordingly, this parable should begin with the statement, “The kingdom of the heavens has become like…”

But this same translation — “has become like” — should not be repeated in the remaining five parables. Rather, using the noun *homoios,* with a verb following, the translation, “the kingdom of the heavens is like…” (introducing each of the remaining parables) is probably as accurate as it can be rendered.

But this translation, introducing the last five parables, must be understood in the light of the way in which the whole matter is introduced in the parable of the wheat and tares. That is, this parable opens by revealing, “The kingdom of the heavens *has become like…”* Moving from the parable of the Sower to the parable of the wheat and tares, the kingdom of the heavens*became like;* then, the kingdom of the heavens *continues like…* in the remaining five parables.

Thus, in this respect, the opening statement in each of these succeeding parables — “the kingdom of the heavens is like…” — must, contextually, be understood in the sense, *the kingdom of the heavens continues like…* There is a chronological continuity of thought after this fashion as one moves through these parables, something which must be recognized if the parables are to be properly understood.

*2) The Kingdom of the Heavens*
“The kingdom of the heavens” is *a realm.*And, in relation to this
earth, the expression would refer simply to “the rule of the heavens
over the earth.”
Satan and his angels presently rule from a heavenly sphere over
the earth. And this heavenly sphere is that realm in which Christ and
His co-heirs will reside during the coming age when they rule from
the heavens over the earth, following Satan and his angels being cast
out (Rev. 12:4, 7-9; *ref.* the author’s book, *The Most High Ruleth*). Thus, the kingdom of the heavens *becoming* as described in the
parable of the wheat and tares, or *continuing* as described in the subsequent five parables, cannot be a reference to *the realm* of the kingdom
per se. The realm itself doesn’t change. Only certain things about the
kingdom can change (*e.g.,* the message about the kingdom). The complete parabolic section in Matthew chapter thirteen is
introduced and concluded after a similar fashion. And seeing how
this is done, the thought inherent in the use of the expression, “the
kingdom of the heavens,” in the second through seventh parables can
be easily ascertained.
In the parable of the Sower, setting the stage for the remaining
parables, “the word of the kingdom” is in view (vv. 19-23). This is a
message pertaining to Christian faithfulness during the present dispensation, with a view to occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ
in the kingdom of the heavens during the coming age.
That is to say, the Word of the Kingdom is *a message about the realm
presently occupied by Satan and his angels, which Christ and His co-heirs
will one day occupy.*
Then, concluding all seven parables, Christ stated relative to
these parables, “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the
kingdom of the heavens is like unto…” (v. 52). Again, the Word of
the Kingdom is in view. The instruction to which Christ referred is
instruction in exactly the same thing seen in the introductory parable,
the parable of the Sower — *i.e., instruction in the Word of the Kingdom.* Andexactly the same thing isin view through the use of the expression,
“the kingdom of the heavens,” introducing the second through seventh
parables. It’s not *the realm*of the kingdom of the heavens which *has become like* and *continues like* that described in these parables. Such would
be impossible. Rather, it is *the proclamation, offer, and reception or rejection*
of the kingdom of the heavens (referred to both before and after these six
parables) *which has become like and continues like that described in the parables.*

(The same thing can be seen in the offer of the kingdom to Israel by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy. The kingdom of the heavens was “at hand [‘had drawn near’]” [Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7].

The realm itself hadn’t drawn near. *The realm remained unchanged. BUT the prospect of Israel moving into and occupying that realm, based on national repentance, had drawn near* [*cf.* Matt. 6:33; 11:12; 21:43].)

**Sons of the Kingdom, Sons of the Devil**

Only two types of individualsare seen in the parable of the wheat and tares. They are referred to by the expressions “wheat [or, ‘good seed’]” and “tares” (vv. 24, 25). *The wheat, the good seed,* are identified as “the children [‘sons’] of the kingdom,” and *the tares* are identified as “the children [‘sons’] of the wicked one” (v. 38).

*The One sowing the good seed* is identified as “the Son of man,” *a Messianic title* (v. 37; *cf.* Ps. 8:4; Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 16:13-16).
And *the one sowing the tares* is identified as “the enemy,” “the devil,” *the incumbent ruler in the kingdom* (v. 39).
*EVERYTHING about this parable has to do with a particular work of God (relative to the kingdom) and with a particular countering work of Satan (also relative to the kingdom).*
God has placed individuals out in the world, *with a view to their bringing forth fruit;* and this fruit would, in turn, be in relation to *the proffered kingdom.*
And Satan has placed contrary minded individuals (v. 41) in the midst of those who are bearing fruit, *seeking to counter that which is occurring.* It is only through this means that Satan would envision any hope at all of retaining his present ruling position.

(The word “tares” is a translation of the Greek word *zizanion,* which refers to a troublesome sprout appearing in grainfields, resembling wheat, though it is not wheat.)

Now, put all of this together for the complete picture of something which has been occurring throughout the dispensation, which has gone almost completely unrecognized.

This parable has to do, not with how Satan seeks *to PREVENT fruit-bearing* (that was seen in the first three parts of the previous par- able, the parable of the Sower), but with how Satan seeks *to STOP fruit-bearing* — something not seen in the previous parable, or really not seen in the same fashion in any of the subsequent parables.

This parable reveals Satan’s attack against *a select group of Christians.* It reveals his attack against*fruit-bearing Christians.
And it is among THESE Christians that Satan goes about seeking to counter God’s plans and purposes through sowing that which resembles wheat, though it is not wheat.*
Satan knows that *fruit-bearing* is that which God requires of those who are to ascend the throne with His Son in that coming day (*cf.* Matt. 21:18, 19, 43; Heb. 6:7-9). And he will, first of all, *do everything within his power to PREVENT Christians from bearing fruit* (seen in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower). But, when Christians begin bearing fruit (seen in the fourth part of the parable of the Sower), *then he will do everything within his power to STOP them from bearing fruit.* And it is among the latter group of Christians — those bearing fruit — that Satan is seen sowing counterfeits (*in relation to fruit-bearing, individuals producing counterfeit fruit*[Matt. 7:15-20]).

*1) The Wheat — Sons of the Kingdom*

The “good seed,” individuals, sown by the Lord out in the world are specifically referred to by the expression, “the children [‘sons’] of the kingdom.” And, beyond that, the title used to identify the Sower is “the Son of man,” *a Messianic title.*

The significance of their identification as “sons” lies in the fact that Christians are presently “sons of God”*awaiting the adoption* in one respect, but “children of God”*with a view to sonship* in another respect.

Note how Paul dealt with this matter in Rom. 8:14-23:

“For as many as are led [ *lit.,* ‘are being led’] by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
The Spirit itself [‘Himself] beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.
And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together…
…even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (vv. 14-17, 23b).

In this chapter in Romans, as also in Galatians chapters three and four and in Hebrews chapter twelve, reference is made to Christians being “sons” in *a present sense, preceding the adoption* (Rom. 8:14, 15; Gal. 3:26; 4:5-7; Heb. 12:5-8, 16, 17, 23). And these instances would correspond to the way in which the matter is handled in Matthew chapter thirteen.

“Sonship” implies *rulership. ONLY sons* can rule in God’s kingdom. But, as will be shown, *ONLY firstborn sons* can rule within the human realm in God’s kingdom.

All “angels” are *sons of God* because of their special, individual creation. And angels occupy various positions of delegated power and authority in God’s kingdom (*cf.* Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

“Adam” was *a son of God* because of a special creative act of God. But Adam’s descendants were not sons of God. Rather, they were sons of the one from whom they descended. They were sons of Adam (Gen. 5:3ff; Luke 3:38).

Thus, Adam, before the fall, being *a son of God,* was in a position to rule the earth. But the fall resulted in his disqualification. Though he was still a son of God, he, following the fall, was no longer in a position to take the sceptre.

And Adam’s descendants were in no position to take the sceptre, for two reasons. Not only were they fallen creatures (a position inherited from Adam), but they were not sons of God. Rather, they were sons of Adam, sons of a fallen creature.

Two thousand years later God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees for purposes which had been lost in Adam. Through Abraham’s lineage, God set about to bring forth *a separate creation,* one which He could adopt as*His firstborn son.* Redemption would then be provided, allowing a segment of mankind, for the first time since Adam’s fall, to be in a position to rule the earth.

This special creation was performed in the person of Abraham’s grandson, Jacob (Isa. 43:1); and this special creation was of a nature which would allow it to be passed on through the genes, through Jacob’s twelve sons, resulting in a nation recognized as separate and distinct from all the other nations (thus, the distinction between Jew and Gentile [Num. 23:8-11]).

Then, once God had a separate nation of this nature — which would be viewed as *a son* because of the special creation in Jacob — he *adopted this nation into a firstborn status* (Ex. 4:22, 23), *redeemed those comprising this nation*(Ex. 12:1ff), and *called this nation out of Egypt under Moses to rule at the head of the nations in a land previously covenanted to their forefathers* (*cf.* Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-12; 15:17, 18; 19:5, 6).

That is, a redeemed people, recognized as *God’s firstborn son,* was being called forth to rule in that part of God’s kingdom which Adam had previously been created to rule.

But coming on down into modern times, Israel is not presently ruling the earth (because of past disobedience); nor is Israel even in a position to rule today. Israel, though still retaining the nation’s position as*God’s firstborn son,* is presently scattered among the nations, in *unbelief.*Even the remnant presently in the land is there in *unbelief.*

Thus, Israel, in this state of *unbelief*(whether in or out of the land), though still God’s firstborn son, *is in no position to rule.* The nation must *first exercise belief.* The nation, as seen in Ex. 12, must *first be redeemed.* They must first, through belief,*apply the blood of the Paschal Lamb Whom they slew 2,000 years ago.*

Then the Church, a separate creation from either Jew or Gentile, is likewise in no position to rule. Though those comprising the Church are*new creations*(“in Christ” [II Cor. 5:17]), can be viewed as *sons,*and are *saved*(unlike those comprising the nation of Israel today), *they have not been adopted (as the nation of Israel was adopted in past time*).

Prior to ascending the throne with Christ, *Christians must first be adopted.* And this is what Romans chapter eight, Galatians chapters three and four, and Hebrews chapter twelve are about.

Christians are presently *Sons*, (because of their standing as*new creations*), awaiting the adoption (their present status); and conse- quently, although Christians are presently “sons,” *they are in no position to rule. ONLY adopted sons* (the Christians’ future standing) can rule.

Thus, *sonship,* portending *rulership,* is seen in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews in relation to *adoption* and *inheritance* (both future).
The matter can be illustrated quite easily from Romans.
The verses leading into Rom. 8:14 (the verse presenting Christians as “sons”) deal with Christians either living after the flesh or putting to death the deeds of the flesh. Then verse fourteen deals with indi- viduals being led by the Spirit of God (contextually, individuals under the leadership of the Spirit putting to death the previously mentioned deeds of the flesh), and these individuals are said to be “the sons of God,” with adoption mentioned in connection with sonship in the next verse (v. 15; *cf.* v. 23).
But then the following verse (v. 16) specifically states that Chris- tians are also presently “children of God.”
However, though Christians are presently seen as both ”children” and “sons,” *NO Christian is presently seen as a firstborn son. That standing awaits a future time, a time following the adoption.*

Contextually, Rom. 8:14-16 should be understood in the light of Heb. 12:5-8, where Christians are seen undergoing *child-training as sons (seen as children of God who are being child-trained as sons of God), with a view to adoption into a firstborn status* (vv. 16, 17, 23).

Thus, Rom. 8:14-16 would have to be understood in the sense of Christians presently being led by the Spirit of God (undergoing *child-training as sons*), who will be manifested as*firstborn sons in that coming day following the adoption, occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in His kingdom* (vv. 17, 19).

That is the subject of the whole passage. And exactly the same thing can be seen through the use of the expression, “sons of the kingdom,” in Matt. 13:38, for that is the subject of the whole passage there as well.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*, Chapter III, pp. 25-33.)

“The sons of the kingdom” in Matt. 13:38 are *the good seed,* the ones bringing forth fruit. They, as the ones in Rom. 8:14 (actually, the “sons” both places are the same), are the ones who will be manifested as “the sons of God,” in the kingdom, in that coming day (Rom. 8:19).

Though all Christians can presently be viewed as *sons* because of creation, not all Christians are being referred to in Matt. 13:38 by the expression, “sons of the kingdom.” Nor are all Christians being referred to in Rom. 8:14 by the expression “sons of God.” The specific reference in Matthew is *to those Christians bringing forth fruit*, and the specific reference in Romans is *to those Christians following the leadership of the Spirit.*

And, again, the two are *the same.
Fruit-bearing CANNOT be realized apart from following the leadership of the Spirit; and following the leadership of the Spirit WILL invariably result in fruit-bearing.*
It is the Son of Man who sows Christians out in the world, with a view to fruit-bearing, which is with a view to the kingdom.
*EVERYTHING points ahead to the kingdom* — *the Son of Man* (the Sower, described through the use of a Messianic title), *the sons of the kingdom* (those sown, described through the use of an expression portending rulership), and *fruit-bearing* (a bringing forth, *with a view to the kingdom*).

*2) The Tares — Sons of the Wicked One*

The “tares” though present the other side of the picture. As previously shown, the tares present Satan’s efforts *to STOP fruit-bearing, to put a STOP to that presently occurring, in the various places where it is occurring.*

And, as also previously shown, Satan is seen carrying on his activities on two fronts:

*1) He is seen seeking to PREVENT Christians from bringing forth fruit*(described in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower).
*2) he is then seen seeking to STOP Christians from bringing forth fruit*(described in the parable of the tares, forming a commentary on the fourth part of the parable of the Sower).

If Satan can *PREVENT Christians from bringing forth fruit,*the matter will be settled at that point, and a continued work will be unnecessary.
But, if he can’t prevent Christians from bringing forth fruit, then he has *to STOP them.*
It is here that he is revealed sowing tares. He sows them right in the midst of Christians bearing fruit, and this is done with *ONE goal in mind.*It is done in an effort *to STOP, through ANY means possible, Christians who are bearing fruit from continuing to bear fruit.*

*a) Identity of the Tares*
Exactly who are those whom Satan sows among fruit-bearing
Christians in an effort to stop them from bearing fruit? The answer
is easy to ascertain.
These parables were given by Christ at His first coming, at a time
when the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to the nation of
Israel; but these parables had to do with events beyond that time,
occurring during a time when the kingdom of the heavens would be
offered to a separate and distinct entity, *the one new man* “in Christ.” And, whether during that time when the kingdom was offered
to Israel, or during that time when the kingdom would be offered to
*the one new man “in Christ,” any realization of the offer was contingent on
ONE thing* — *FRUIT-BEARING*(Matt. 21:18, 19, 43).
Israel failed to bring forth fruit. And note who was responsible
for the nation’s failure in this realm. It was *the religious leaders of that day,* mainly the Scribes and Pharisees, seated “in Moses’ seat,” who
controlled the religious life of the nation (Matt. 23:2).
They were the ones who followed Christ about the country seeking,
at every turn, to speak out against the Messenger and His message.
They were the ones *directly responsible* for the nation’s rejection of the
King and kingdom. They had “shut up the kingdom of the heavens
against men [‘in the presence of men’]” (Matt. 23:13). And for this
reason they experienced a rebuke and condemnation at Christ’s hands
unlike that experienced by any other religious group in Israel (vv. 14ff). Bringing this over into Christendom, whom would Satan use during
the present dispensation to either prevent or stop fruit-bearing relative
to the kingdom? In the light of the past offer to Israel, there is only one
possible answer. It would have to be the same as that seen in Israel
when the same offer was open to the nation almost 2,000 years ago. It was *Jewish religious leaders* then, and the counterpart would have
to be *Christian religious leaders* today. Those outside the nation — the
unregenerate world — had nothing to do with the matter then; nor can
those outside the Church — the unregenerate world — have anything
to do with the matter today. It was *those within* which Satan used in
Israel in the past, and it is *those within* which he uses in the Church
today (*cf.* Matt. 15:1ff; 16:1ff; Acts 20:29, 30).
But how could Christians be identified by the expression, “sons
of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38)? Note several references in Scripture
relative to Israelites acting in similar capacities and the answer will
become apparent.
In John chapter eight, *Jews who had believed on Christ* (v. 31), who
were acknowledged by Christ to be “Abraham’s seed” (v. 37), were also
said, *because of their works,* to be of their “father the devil” (vv. 39-44). In Matthew chapter sixteen, Peter, because he stated relative to
Christ’s sufferings, death, and resurrection on the third day, “Lord:
this shall not be unto thee,” was associated directly with Satan. Jesus
said to Peter — not to Satan, but to Peter — “Get thee behind me,
Satan” (vv. 21-23; *cf.* John 6:70).
Then in Matt. 23:15, the Scribes and Pharisees — those having “shut
up the kingdom of the heavens” (v. 13) — were said to have made a
proselyte “twofold more the child of hell [*lit.,* ‘twofold more *a son of
Gehenna’*]” than themselves. Their *sonship,* because of that which they had done, was associated with *Gehenna* (the place of refuse) rather
than with the kingdom.
With all these things in mind — seeing a counterpart in Israel to
that existing in Christendom — viewing the expression, “sons of the
wicked one” in Matt. 13:38 as a reference to the saved, not the unsaved,
would, contextually,be the only natural way in which thematter could
be viewed. And, that this is the correct way to view this part of the
parable can be shown through other means as well.
Seeing the tares, the sons of the wicked one, as those within the
Church, not without, is in complete accord with*ALL facets of the matter.* It is in complete accord with*the history of the offer to Israel*, it is in
complete accord with (and the only thing which can possibly adequately
explain) *that which can easily be seen occurring throughout Christendom
today*, and it is in complete accord with *that which can be seen when one
moves on into the third and fourth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.* Then there is one other thing which will preclude viewing the
matter after any other fashion. That which the text reveals about God’s
future dealings with the wheat and tares should resolve all doubts
which anyone might have concerning their identity.

*b) Judgment of the Wheat and Tares*

Both the wheat and tares are seen being dealt with *at the same time and place.*And the Lord’s dealings with both after the fashion seen in the parable is with a view*to entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom.*

All those represented by *the wheat* are gathered into the barn. But the matter is quite different for those represented by *the tares.* They are seen being gathered and burned (vv. 30, 40-43).

But note something, and note it well. *Eternal verities are not being dealt with in this parable. Rather, the subject is FRUIT-BEARING, with a view to the KINGDOM.*

Everything stated about the Lord’s dealings with those represented by the wheat and tares is *in perfect accord* with Scripture elsewhere relating to that which will emanate out of issues and determinations at the judgment seat (*cf.* Matt. 24:45-51; 25:19ff; John 15:1-6; I Cor. 3:12-15; Heb. 6:7-9). And dealings by the Lord of this nature would be *completely out of line* with any thought that the tares represent unregenerate individuals.

Scripture *NEVER* presents the Lord dealing with the saved and unsaved *at the same time and place after the fashion seen here.* The saved and unsaved being dealt with together in this fashion would have the Lord dealing with both in relation*to FRUIT-BEARING, with a view to the KINGDOM — an impossibility.*

*c) Leave Them Alone*

Then there is one other thing which needs to be considered about those whom Satan has sown in the midst of fruitful Christians, seeking to stop them from bearing fruit. And the importance of following Christ’s instructions in this respect*CANNOT be overemphasized.*

What is to be the fruitful Christian’s attitude toward those whom Satan has placed in their midst, to stop them from bearing fruit? What are fruitful Christians to do about antagonism toward their fruitfulness and the reason why fruit is being borne? The question is asked and answered in verses twenty-eight through thirty of the parable.

“Wilt thou then that we go out and gather them [the tares] up?

But he [Christ] said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.
Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers [angels (v. 41)], Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

Those standing in the way of one’s interest in having a part with Christ in His kingdom are to be dealt with *after ONLY one fashion.
They are to be left ALONE! “Leave them ALONE!” (Matt. 15:14). Simply IGNORE them, CONTINUE doing that which the Lord has called you to do, and let the Lord take care of the matter in His Own way and time.*

5

Parable of the Mustard Seed

***Conditions Eventually Produced by the Tares***

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. 13:31, 32).

The parable of the mustard seed continues with *the SAME central thoughts* set forth in the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares. *Fruit-bearing* remains at the forefront (v. 31), as well as *Satan’s continuing activity as he seeks to STOP Christians from bearing fruit.*

And the method which Satan uses as he seeks to stop Christians from bearing fruit, revealed in the previous parable, is *through sowing tares among the wheat.*

Then the parable of the mustard seed reveals that which would happen because of this activity of Satan. In this respect, the parable of the mustard seed is simply a commentary on the previous parable, providing additional explanatory help.

In the true sense of the definition of a parable and why the Lord used parables — to provide additional information pertaining to previously revealed truths (*ref.*Chapter I of this book) — the parable of the mustard seed was given to help explain the parable which had previously been given, the parable of the wheat and tares.

And the same thing could be said concerning why the Lord gave the parable of the wheat and tares. It was given to help explain a part of the parable given prior to this one, the parable of the Sower.

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Then, looking ahead to the parable following the parable of the mustard seed — the parable of the leaven — the same thing can be seen. This parable was given to provide additional explanatory help for the parable of the mustard seed.

That’s the evident Divinely designed interrelationship which exists between the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. The parable of the Sower, the first parable spoken outside the house, by the seaside, *introduces the matter;* and the succeeding three parables spoken outside the house, by the seaside, *simply build, after a successive fashion, on that introduced in the first parable.*

**Natural, Unnatural Growth**

In the second parable — the parable of the wheat and tares — Satan is seen sowing contrary-minded individuals in the midst of Christians bringing forth fruit (seen in the latter part of the first parable, the par- able of the Sower), seeking *to STOP fruit-bearing.*This is how matters *had become* in Christendom relative to fruit-bearing, with the kingdom of the heavens in view.

Then the third parable, the parable of the mustard seed, *presents how matters would continue in this respect.* This parable first depicts the mustard seed germinating, with *a natural growth occurring for a time.*

*The natural growth* of this particular seed, “the least of all seeds,” would result in *an herb,*referred to as “the greatest among herbs” when grown.
And, beyond that, *a natural growth of this herb would result in fruitbearing* (v. 32), as seen in the previous two parables.
Thus, Satan’s success in stopping fruit-bearing would be contingent on his success in preventing the continuance of a natural growth of the mustard seed. One would go hand-in-hand with the other.
The mustard seed in the parable represents, not individuals per se, but *an entity* made up of individuals — *the good seed, the sons of the kingdom*from the previous parable. And *a natural or unnatural growth* of the mustard seed would represent *a natural or unnatural development* of those comprising the good seed.
Should Satan be *unsuccessful* in his efforts to prevent *a natural development* of those comprising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in that which God had intended; and *fruit-bearing* would go hand-in-hand with their growth and development.
However, should Satan be *successful* in his efforts to prevent the continuance of a natural development of those comprising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in something other than that which God had intended; and *barrenness* would ensue.
And the latter is exactly what is seen in this parable. The mustard seed, following a period of normal growth (which, if not interfered with, would result in “the greatest among herbs”), is seen experienc- ing*an abnormal growth and becoming “a tree.”*
And not only did this abnormal growth ensue, *but the mustard seed is seen developing so abnormally that it not only grew into a tree,* but the nature of this tree allowed “the birds of the air,” *individuals doing the work of Satan, to find a lodging place in its branches* (v. 32; *cf.* vv. 4, 19).
Thus, the third parable, continuing the thought from the second parable, presents *the tares being quite effective.* They are seen deceiving fruit-bearing Christians to the degree that *they bring about an unnatural spiritual growth among these Christians*, *resulting in unfruitfulness, barrenness.
A*nd the matter is carried to the point that, in the end, *the tares are able to simply settle down in that which they had produced, finding ac- ceptance among those whom they had deceived.*

**False Teachers**

This work of Satan — producing an unnatural growth, resulting in barrenness — could only have been accomplished *through ONE means.* It could only have been accomplished through the promulgation of *false doctrine.* It could only have been accomplished through Satan placing *false teachers* in the midst of fruit-bearing Christians, *leading them AWAY from the truth of the Scriptures, leading them AWAY from an adherence to the faith.*

*And this is EXACTLY the way Scripture elsewhere reveals that the matter occurred.*
There are multiplied warnings numerous places in Scripture concerning false teachers who would arise and teach “perverse things,” particularly relative to *the faith, the Word of the Kingdom.*
And these false teachers would arise, not from the world, but *from within Christendom itself.*These false teachers would arise *from the ranks of Christians, from within the Churches*(Acts 20:29-32; *cf.* I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 2:8, 18; 3:7, 8; 4:1-4; II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 3ff).
*As it was*surrounding Christ’s first coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, *so would it be*surrounding Christ’s second coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians. *Jewish religious leaders were responsible* for that which happened in the past dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom at Christ’s first coming, and *Christian religious leaders are responsible* for that which is happening during the present dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom and Christ’s second coming.
*The religious leaders in Israel* followed Christ about the country and sought, at every turn, to speak against that which was being seen and heard. Christ’s ministry centered around *supernatural signs*, *which pointed to that which Israel could have*—*supernatural healing, supernatural provision*—*if the nation would repent.*
But the religious leaders would have no part in the matter; and *they misled the people*, resulting in the nation’s rejection of the proffered kingdom and the subsequent crucifixion of the nation’s King.
And the situation relative to the proclamation of the Word of the King- dom throughout the present dispensation has been *no different.*Christians down through the years have been misled, not by those in the world, but *by their own religious leaders.*Scripture is very clear on this matter.

*1) At the Beginning of the Dispensation*

*The message of the hour* at the beginning of the dispensation — one proclaimed throughout Christendom — centered around *the faith, the saving of the soul, the Word of the Kingdom.* This was the message which Paul referred to as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), and “the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.,* ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4); this was the message which Paul had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:11, 12, 16; 2:7); and this was the message which Paul and others, during the first few decades of the existence of the Church, “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:5, 6, 23).

(The reference to “every creature which is under heaven” in Col. 1:23 would, contextually, refer to *the saved ALONE,* not to the unsaved. This would be a reference to *ALL of the saved* having heard the message which saved individuals are to hear following their salvation — *the Word of the Kingdom.*

The unsaved *CANNOT* be in view in this passage, for the *ONLY* message which they are to hear is the good news that Christ has died for their sins. *ONLY* after they have heard this message and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ are they in a position to hear the message referenced in this verse in Colossians, which has to do with *the purpose for their salvation, the reason why they have been saved.*)

Thus, during the first century of the Church’s existence, the mes - sage surrounding the proffered kingdom was something universally proclaimed throughout Christendom. *And this message could ONLY have been well-known and understood by Christians everywhere*, resulting in at least a segment of Christendom developing in a natural fashion and these Christians, correspondingly, bearing fruit.

It was within a setting of this nature that Satan sowed tares among the wheat, seeking to *STOP* the natural growth and development of the seed which had been sown; and success in stopping this natural growth and development would, in turn, over time, ultimately result in *a barren condition of the plant.*

Now, note the problem which Satan faced at the beginning of the dispensation. He faced the problem of countering a message which was being proclaimed and received throughout Christendom. Christians who had received the true message were *developing after a proper fashion* (growing from immaturity to maturity), with *a corresponding fruitfulness.*

To counter the true message, Satan simply placed individuals proclaiming a false message in the midst of those Christians who had received the true message. Then, over time, the false message progressively took root and did its damaging work, accomplishing its purpose.

This false message, once received, resulted in an improper development in Christendom (an improper growth from immaturity to maturity). And, *developing after an improper fashion, a corresponding barrenness ensued.*

And Satan’s work in this manner is how Scripture reveals that he stops fruit-bearing. He places individuals with *a false message relative to the kingdom among those bearing fruit for the kingdom.*

*The false message takes root, growth becomes progressively unnatural, and fruit-bearing is stymied.* Then, the false message continues to take hold *UNTIL the point is reached where growth becomes so unnatural that fruit-bearing can no longer exist.*

*a) The Messengers*

Both Peter in his second epistle and Jude begin their epistles by exhorting Christians to strain every muscle of their being in the present race of the faith (II Peter 1:2-11; Jude 3); and that which necessitates this exhortation, in both epistles, is *the presence of false teachers in their midst* (II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 4ff).

These are *the same false teachers* to which Christ had referred in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, *who would produce an unnatural growth among fruit-bearing Christians.*

And these are *the same false teachers* to which Paul subsequently referred, who would arise among Christians, *take truths concerning the Word of the Kingdom, and distort and twist these truths* (Acts 20:30, 31).

These are *the apostates,* dealt with extensively in Scripture — a type individual identified by the meaning of the word itself.
Our English word, “apostasy,” is simply *an Anglicized form of the Greek word apostasia.* This is a compound word comprised of *apo* (‘from’) and *stasis*(‘to stand’). The word means “to stand away from”; and the word refers to *a person standing away from a place which he had previously occupied.*
The apostasy in view has to do with “the faith” (*cf.*II Tim. 2:18; 3:8; Jude 3). Thus, *true apostates relative to the faith* can only be individuals who had, at one time,*received the message concerning the faith; but then, at a later time, they had departed from an adherence to this message.*
These are individuals who had initially *heard, understood, and received the truth;*but then they had *apostatized.* They had “stood away from” the truth. They turned from the truth, began to speak out against the truth, and, in the process, taught that which was untrue.
These are the type individuals referred to in Paul’s warnings in both Acts and his epistles, as well as Peter’s and Jude’s warnings in their epistles. These are the type individuals — those quite familiar with the matter which they were speaking against — whom Satan knew that he could use *the most effectively,* whom Satan knew that he could use to do *the most damage.*
Thus, Satan simply began to place individuals of this nature in the midst of those Christians bringing forth fruit. And they began to “draw away disciples” *after themselves* (Acts 20:30). They began to reproduce *after their kind*(*cf.*Gen. 1:11), resulting in fruit also *after their kind,* an “evil fruit” (Matt. 7:15-20; *cf.*vv. 13, 14, 21-23).
Aside from Paul’s identification of these individuals in Acts 20:30 — “of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things…” — note Peter’s identification of them in II Peter 2:18-20:

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

Note particularly the word “knowledge” in verse twenty. These individuals had escaped the “pollutions of the world” through the “knowledge [Gk., *epignosis,* ‘mature knowledge’] of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” They had come into *a mature knowledge* of the things in view — things surrounding the Word of the Kingdom. And having come into a mature knowledge of these things, they turned from these things and began *to teach perverse, contrary things.*

That these were saved individuals is evident, for an unsaved person cannot even come into a rudimentary knowledge of these things (I Cor. 2:14 [*gnosis,* the regular Greek word for “knowledge,” appears in this passage]), much less the mature knowledge seen in II Peter 2:20. Thus, the text can only have to do with *saved individuals turning from the central message of that day, distorting and twisting the truth as they taught false doctrine relative to the Word of the Kingdom.*

Satan used this type individual — after this manner, during the opening decades of the Church’s existence — to do his bidding, to stop Christians from bearing fruit. And though the ones whom Satan used were also Christians, they were doing the works of Satan; and doing works of this nature, they were identified with Satan, referred to as “tares,” “sons of the wicked one” (*ref.* Chapter IV in this book).

*b) Their Message*

The teaching of the apostates is spoken of as “damnable heresies [*lit.,* ‘destructive heresies’ or, ‘heresies that lead to destruction’]” (II Peter 2:1). And the destruction in view has *NOTHING* to do with salvation by grace through faith, with the Christians’ presently possessed free gift of eternal life.

Eternal life is *NOT even in view.* The destruction has to do *SOLELY with the Word of the Kingdom, the subject matter at hand.* The apostates taught heresy of a nature which led Christians to *a destructive end relative to the proffered kingdom.*

Numerous statements are given concerning the teaching and action of the apostates (*cf.* II Peter 2:1-3, 10ff; Jude 4, 8ff). But one thing in Peter’s second epistle stands out above everything else. There is a septenary structure to Peter’s second epistle, with a particular reference to and emphasis upon Christ’s return within this structure (1:16-18; 3:4-8).

The apostates are seen “walking after their own lusts [‘desires’ — desires which would be *soulical* (‘their own desires’), not *spiritual* (that which the Lord would desire)]” (3:3; *cf.*2:18). And, within this type walk, they are seen proclaiming a message which would strike *at the heart* of all sound Biblical teaching surrounding Christ’s return and the Messianic Kingdom:

“Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were *from the beginning of the creation*” (3:4).

Then the verses which follow (vv. 5-9) — answering the apostates false message through referring to events beginning with the opening verses of Genesis — make matters very clear that *the heart of the apostates’ message had to do with denying Christ’s return at the end of six thousand years, with attendant destruction on the one hand and attendant blessings on the other.* They had willingly allowed the things surrounding this entire panorama of teaching to escape their attention, and they are seen infiltrating the ranks of fruit-bearing Christians everywhere, seeking to promulgate their false doctrine.

The misleading, destructive doctrine proclaimed by the apostates is seen taking *numerous forms.*But *the foundation* upon which all their false teaching rested is seen taking only *one form.*

All their false teaching is seen resting on *a totally perverted form of the true foundation set forth in Gen. 1:1-2:3* — the God-established foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests.

In all the various forms that their false teaching took, they sought to do away with two things:

*1) The septenary structure of Scripture as set forth in the beginning, in Gen. 1:1-2:3.
2) Teachings surrounding Christ’s return within the framework of this septenary structure (at the end of six days, at the end of 6,000 years).*

Then, building on a totally perverted foundation of this nature, the apostates sought to spread all types of destructive heresies relative to the various facets of the Word of the Kingdom among fruit-bearing Christians. And, over time, as seen in the parable of the mustard seed, they were quite successful.

The mustard seed germinated and grew, normally for a time, but then in an abnormal manner; and, over time, it became something which it was not supposed to become at all. It became*a tree.* And not only did it become a tree, but the false teachers took up residence in the branches of the tree, continuing their destructive work from within.

Proper growth can come *ONLY from that which has NOT been corrupted* (I Peter 2:1, 2). And the converse of that is equally true. *ONLY improper growth can result when corruption has occurred.*

Thus, to bring about improper growth, the false teachers simply proclaimed a corrupted form of the *ONLY thing* which God had provided for the nourishment and well-being of the spiritual man. And through so doing, they went back to and began with *the very heart of the matter* — *the foundation itself*, *in the opening two chapters of Genesis.*

It was *the work of the apostates* which brought about the conditions seen in the parable of the mustard seed. *A corrupted and improper diet of spiritual food resulted in a corrupted and improper growth*.

And a growth of this nature, over time, ultimately resulted in *barrenness. THEN the false teachers simply took up residence within that which they had produced, assuring that conditions would remain in a corrupted and barren state.*

*2) At the End of the Dispensation*

Near the end of the dispensation (today), relative to the Word of the Kingdom, conditions throughout Christendom are seen to have become completely turned around from the way that they existed at the beginning of the dispensation. After almost two millenniums, the Word of the Kingdom — taught and understood throughout the Churches at the beginning of the dispensation — *is seldom even heard in Christian circles.* And, with the message not being proclaimed, *Christians throughout the Churches of the land, correspondingly, have little to no understanding of truths surrounding the coming kingdom.*

Thus, during the present day and time, Satan has *little need* for apostates to infiltrate and settle down within the ranks of Christians. Christendom is *too far gone for any type overall change or recovery to occur.*

And, beyond that, though little infiltration of apostates need exist on Satan’s part today, he would undoubtedly be hard-pressed to even find very many true apostates during the present time.

For a person to be a true apostate, he would, first of all, have to come into an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom before he could apostatize. And those having *a conversant knowledge* of this message today — the only ones in a position to apostatize — are far and few between.

That which exists in Christendom today is *the aftermath, the end result,* of Satan sowing tares among the wheat, of Satan bringing about an abnormal growth of the mustard seed. In general, in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, because of that which has occurred in the past, *a corrupted Christendom presently exists.*

Those occupying the pulpit are silent on the subject, and those occupying the pew, accordingly, know little to nothing about the matter. And, should the subject ever emerge — as it sometimes does — those occupying the pulpit are usually quick in their attempts to squelch the message. This message encompasses things which are out of line with the training which they received in the theology schools of the land; and they, accordingly, view the message after an erroneous fashion.

In this respect, the effectiveness of the false teachers at the beginning of the dispensation is evidenced by two things near the end of the dispensation. It is evidenced by *the condition of Christian leadership in particular and the consequent condition of the Church in general.*

Thus, a completely different situation exists in Christendom during the present day and time than existed during the first several centuries of the dispensation. There would be some need for true apostates, for there are individuals — one here, and one there — who believe the Word of the Kingdom and are bringing forth fruit. But such a need would be minimal.

In this respect, with conditions as such, Satan could concentrate his efforts on bringing to completion that which he began almost two millenniums ago. He could concentrate on *maintaining the status quo as he continues his efforts to produce total corruption.* And, as will become evident in the completion of the parables given outside the house, by the seaside (the parable of the leaven), *total corruption* is exactly the picture which these parables (and Scriptures elsewhere) present of conditions in Christendom at the end of the dispensation.

**A Tree**

The particular type abnormal spiritual growth seen resulting from the false message of the apostates is something which can be seen in both Church history throughout the course of the dispensation and in the Church of today near the end of the dispensation. The abnormal growth of the mustard seed in history resulted in *a tree,* in which those who had brought about its abnormal growth are, in the end, seen resting in its branches; and the tree remains to this day, with its roots sinking ever deeper into the earth, with Satan’s emissaries resting in its branches.

*1) Symbolism of a Tree*

To fully comprehend and understand that which is in view, note the symbolism of *a tree* in Scripture. A “tree” is used in Scripture to symbolize *a national power.*

In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, “trees” are seen symbolizing *nations* which had sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel, in his prophecy, refers to the vision of “a tree in the midst of the earth,” which “reached unto heaven.” And this “tree” is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon* (Dan. 4:10-12, 20-22).

Israel is referred to in Joel’s prophecy by a “fig tree” (1:7). And Christ not only referred to *Israel*through the symbolism of a “fig tree” during his earthly ministry but He also referred to *the surrounding Gentile nations* through the symbolism of “all the trees” (Matt. 21:18, 19; 24:32; Luke 21:29).

There can be no question concerning Scripture using “trees” in a symbolic sense to signify *national powers.* And, remaining within the confines of the symbolism which Scripture itself provides, there can, as well, be no question concerning that which is in view through the mustard seed germinating and eventually becoming *a tree.*

The teaching, through the symbolism given, is clear. That represented by the mustard seed germinated and eventually became *a national power* — *something which it was NOT supposed to become at all during the present dispensation*, *something reserved for the coming dispensation.*

It became a national power during the time Satan ruled within the kingdom of the heavens; it became a national power within the present kingdom of Satan.

And any Biblical thought of Christians exercising power in the world was to be reserved for a future day, a time after Satan had been put down and Christ had taken the sceptre; power of this nature was to be exercised *SOLELY within the future kingdom of Christ.*

(In short, Satan, through his action as seen in the parable of the mustard seed, caused Christendom, forming the Church, to grow into *a national power* which would be under his control and sway.

Satan, throughout Man’s Day, following man’s fall, has ruled the earth through the nations [once national powers had been brought into existence]. This though would exclude Israel [once the nation had been brought into existence], for Israel was not to be “reckoned among the nations” [Num. 23:9].

This type rule by Satan is revealed in Dan. 10:12-21, with Satan and his angels ruling through the nations, but with Israel occupying a position separate from the nations and Satan’s rule in this respect [*ref.* the author’s books, *The Most High Ruleth* and *The Spiritual Warfare*, for additional information on this subject].

Through Satan’s efforts — producing an abnormal growth in Christendom, resulting in that symbolized by *a tree* — he sought to make Christendom *a national power*during the time when he rules through national powers, with his emissaries finding ready acceptance in this

national power [the birds of the air lodging in the branches of the tree]. Satan sought to make Christendom *a national power, similar to or like the nations, through which he and his angels could exert rulership and control.*)

*2) In History, During the Present Day*

During the early part of the first century, when the apostates first infiltratedthe ranksof fruit-bearing Christians, Christianity waslooked upon in the Roman world as *an illegal religion.*And, in some quarters, Christians were looked upon by the Romans as being *guilty of treason.*

Rome practiced emperor worship, and, within this practice, “reli - gion” and “state” became *one entity.*Christians, on the other hand, were monotheistic and spoke of a King other than Caesar and of a Kingdom other than Rome. Thus, it is little wonder that the Romans looked upon Christianity and Christians in*an illegal and a treasonous sense.*

It was these basic differences which resulted in all of the Roman persecution, lasting several centuries. But something else also happened during this time. The apostates progressively broke down the barriers separating the Roman Empire and Christianity, until the day came, near the end of the fourth century, when these barriers no longer existed. And this was followed by a merger of Church and State.

Constantine, during the opening years of the fourth century put a stop to the persecution of Christians, and he himself later embraced Christianity (for reasons upon which historians differ). And all of this set the stage for that which was to follow.

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion;* and, in the year 395 A.D., Christianity wasfinally recognizedas*the officialandonlyreligion ofthe Roman Empire.*

*At this point, Christianity found itself completely enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, completely out of line with God’s plans and purposes for the new creation “in Christ.”*

This condition of Christendom though did not result from the previous Roman persecution. The previous persecution had only resulted in Christian growth.

As Tertullian, a Christian living during the period of Roman persecution, said, *“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”*
That which ultimately occurred in Christendom was caused by *the apostates.* Their attack was not centered upon *the entity itself* (as was Rome’s attack) but upon *that which brought the entity to a fruitbearing stage.* They went back to that upon which the entity was fed and nourished, introducing corruption and destruction at this point.
And the end result was *exactly* as Christ had foretold. The mustard seed germinated, grew normally for awhile, then took an abnormal growth, and eventually became *a tree.*
The abnormal growth, over time, ultimately resulted in *barrenness;* and Christians found themselves occupying a position which they were not supposed to occupy during the present dispensation at all. They found themselves *associated with Gentile world power within the present kingdom of Satan.*
And this is a position from which *Christianity has NEVER recovered.* Down to the present day, though Rome has long since passed off the scene, Christians can still be found involving themselves in activities associated with *the tree* of Matt. 13:32. They can be seen on every hand involving themselves in the present government after all types of fashions, attempting to exert some type power in the present kingdom under Satan.
But this is simply *NOT the day*when Christians are to rule and reign. *That day lies in the future, after Christ has taken the kingdom and Christians have been placed in positions of power and authority.*
The entire present system is in its *death-throes* and is to be destroyed by Christ when He returns. Christians having works associated with the present system will one day see their works suffer the same fate which the system is about to suffer. Such works will be *destroyed, burned*“in fire” at the judgment seat; and even though these Christians will be “saved; yet so as by [‘through’] fire” (I Cor. 3:11-15), they will be left with *nothing of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ.* And they will consequently *be rejected for regal positions with Christ.*
But for those Christians who will not have allowed the pseudo form of Christendom enmeshed within the present world system to govern their lives, things will be different. Their works will not suffer the same fate as those having works associated with the present world system. They will possess works which will endure the fire, and they will be left with *something of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ.* These are the ones who will have waited to exercise regal power and authority, and these are the ones who will *rule as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.*

6

Parable of the Leaven

***Conditions Ultimately Produced by the Tares***

“Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of the heavens is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

The parable of the leaven is the last of the four parables which Christ gave outside the house, down by the seaside. This parable reveals the conclusion of matters surrounding events covered by the first three parables; and this conclusion is revealed prior to Christ going back inside the house, where He gave three additional parables (with all seven, together, revealing *an entire sequence of events extending from the inception of the Church to the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom*).

This parable contains the first mention of “leaven” in the New Testament, and Christ used the word in a symbolic sense, in an unexplained manner, knowing that it could be understood *ONLY one way.*

The Old Testament symbolism surrounding “leaven” and the flow of thought seen in the three parables preceding the first use of this word in the New Testament left *NO room* for those hearing these parables to question how the word was to be understood.

Leaven was *a foreign substance* added to dough, causing the dough to rise. And the Old Testament, using leaven in a symbolic sense, *ALWAYS* used the word *ONLY one way.* The Old Testament *ALWAYS* used the word to symbolize *that which caused corruption and deterioration.*

The Mosaic Law forbade the use of leaven in offerings made by the priests in Israel (Lev. 2:11). In this respect, the absence of leaven (the absence of a foreign substance) pointed to *purity,* as seen in the first usage of this word in Scripture (Gen. 19:3 [*establishing*, through the way “leaven” is introduced in Scripture, *the manner in which this word would be used throughout the remainder of Scripture*]).

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However, there were two exceptions in the Mosaic Economy to that stated in Lev. 2:11, forbidding the use of leaven in offerings. Both Lev. 7:13 and Lev. 23:17 mention offerings where leaven was to be included; and Amos, centuries later, mentioned an offering which was to include leaven as well (4:5).

But in all three of these instances where leaven was to be included, other offerings are also mentioned; and, in two of these instances, the other offerings are specifically stated to include *blood sacrifices,* to atone for man’s sins. And, in the one offering where blood is not specifically mentioned (Amos4:5), blood could only be inferred from the other offerings where blood is mentioned (Lev. 7:1-14; 23:5, 27 [*cf.* Ex. 12:1ff; Lev. 16:1ff]; Amos 4:4).

In the light of both the context and corresponding Scripture else - where, leaven could only have been included in these offerings *to show man’s sin.* Leaven was included *to show corruption within,*as an offering without leaven was used *to show purity within.*

This can be illustrated by referring to God’s command surround - ing the second of the festivals in Lev. 23 — the festival of unleavened bread. Beginning with the day immediately following the death of the firstborn and the application of the blood (the first festival), the Israelites were commanded to refrain from eating anything containing leaven for “seven days,” for *a complete period of time* (Lev. 23:5, 6).

This pointed to God’s truth surrounding the fact that those who had appropriated the blood were then to keep themselves pure for a complete period of time, for the entire duration of their lives which followed. This was true for the Israelites at the time these festivals were instituted, it was true for the Israelites down through the centuries, and it remains true for Christians today. It has been and it remains true for God’s people *throughout ALL time* (I Cor. 5:6-8).

And within the continuing symbolism shown by these festivals, God instituted a day of atonement. This was the sixth of the seven festivals, and it had to do with *shed blood to atone for man’s sins* — the sins of those who had previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs (which was immediately followed by God’s command to not partake of that containing leaven).

The day of atonement had to do with a covering provided for failure — a failure to remain separated from sin — for those having previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs. This festival had to do with their failure to continuously keep themselves separated from that symbolized by leaven.

And exactly the same thing can be seen today through viewing the Christians’ present state in the world and Christ’s present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Christians have applied the blood of the Paschal Lamb and have been commanded to keep themselves pure. But Christians, possessing a body of death, as the Israelites in the past dispensation, experience failure; and, as in the camp of Israel, provision is made for failure. Christ is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat; and His ministry in this respect is on behalf of Christians who sin, providing cleansing.

Cleansing though is not automatic. Rather, it is conditional. Cleansing is dependent on the Christian acknowledging his sins.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9; *cf.* Heb. 4:13-16; 9:23ff; 10:19ff; I John 2:1, 2).

In the light of the way in which leaven is *ALWAYS* used in the Old Testament, Christ could use the word in a symbolic sense — as He did in Matt. 13:33, and in Matt. 16:6, 11 — and His disciples would know *EXACTLY*what was meant (Matt. 16:12).

Or, also in this respect, Paul could use the word in this same symbolic sense in his epistles — as he did in I Cor. 5:6-8, and in Gal. 5:9 — and the recipients of these epistles would also know *EXACTLY*what was meant.

But an added feature about the way leaven is used in Matt. 13:33 is seen in the context leading into the use of this word. The context of the passage itself reveals how this word is to be understood, which is *the SAME way*leaven is used and understood elsewhere in the New Testa- ment. *Every place* leaven appears in the New Testament, the context *ALWAYS* clearly shows the word being used *ONLY one way* — *showing corruption and deterioration* — *in complete keeping with its Old Testament usage.*

In Matt. 13:33, the context leading into the use of leaven has to do with fruit-bearing and with the method Satan uses to *STOP* Christians from bearing fruit. The preceding two parables reveal *Satan introducing false doctrine,* with a progressive corruption and deterioration following. And the parable of the leaven simply reveals*the conclusion of the matter.*

According to the parable of the leaven, the message surrounding the proffered kingdom during the present dispensation would, near the end of the dispensation, *become COMPLETELY leavened. Corruption introduced at the beginning of the dispensation would progressively permeate the whole of Christendom until that having to do with the proffered kingdom would be COMPLETELY corrupted.*

*This is HOW, according to this parable, the dispensation would end.*
**Three Measures of Meal**

“Three” is the number of *Divine perfection.* This number shows*Divine perfection within that which is in view.*“Three measures of meal” — three measures of ground grain, used to make *bread* — are in view. The reference is to *the Word of God* (Matt. 4:4; *cf.*Isa. 55:1, 2), though not the Word in a general sense. Rather, the reference, contextually, is to *the Word in a specific sense, a specific part of the Word, a specific teaching in the Word.*

The subject at hand has to do with *the Word of the Kingdom.* It has to do with how the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ would begin to be proclaimed in Christendom and how this message would *progressively change BECAUSE of something (a foreign substance) placed within the message* (vv. 19-24, 31, 33).

The reference to leaven placed in the three measures of meal, as previously shown, is simply a reference to that introduced in the preceding two parables. *It is a reference to taking that which is false and placing it within that which is Divinely perfect. It is a reference to a corrupting agent being placed within the Divinely perfect God-breathed Word.*

And, again, it is that part of this Divinely perfect revelation having to do with *the Word of the Kingdom*which is in view. *Satan simply began placing those proclaiming a false message about the kingdom among those bearing fruit for the kingdom. The false message took root and began to spread, resulting in corruption and deterioration.*

Then, continuing the explanation in the third parable, because of this false doctrine, a completely unnatural spiritual growth in Christendom followed. The mustard seed in this parable is seen germinating, *growing normally for a time, then experiencing abnormal growth and becoming a tree — something which it wasn’t supposed to become at all.*

And not only did it grow and develop after this fashion, but the end result was*so unnatural that those responsible were able to find a home within that which they, through corruption, had wrought.*

And that, contextually, is what continues in view — *the ONLY thing which can continue in view* — by Christ using the symbolism of a woman taking leaven and hiding it in three measures of meal.

In keeping with the definition of a parable, Christ simply provided additional truth placed alongside of previous truth to help explain the previous truth. *This parable provides additional truth placed alongside the preceding two parables to help explain these parables.*

*Understanding the parable of the leaven is that simple.*
This parable has to do with *the progressive, continuing deterioration* seen in the preceding parable, the parable of the mustard seed; and this preceding parable, in turn, has to do with how Satan went about *curtailing and stopping fruit-bearing* in the parable which preceded it, the parable of the wheat and tares. It has to do with *a corrupting agent* placed within that part of God’s Divinely perfect revelation referred to as “the word of the kingdom.” And it has to do with *this corrupting agent working “TILL the whole [the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ]” had become corrupted.*

**Till the Whole…**

*The reason* for the state in which Christendom presently finds itself is shown by the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, with the fourth parable, the parable of the leaven, depicting *the end of the matter.* This parable shows *a progressive deterioration UNTIL the point of total corruption has been reached.*

Near the end of the dispensation, when the Word of the King - dom has been *completely corrupted,* that which Jesus foretold in this parable would be fulfilled. *In those days, at that time, the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ WILL NOT be — it CANNOT be — heard throughout the Churches of the land.*

The move in Christendom from conditions depicted by the Church in Ephesus to conditions depicted by the Church in Laodicea, seen in Revelation chapters two and three, *will THEN be complete.* The Church will not only have left its “first love” (Rev. 2:4), but the Church will ultimately be brought into a state described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17b).

And one need only look around today to see *this EXACT state of affairs existing in Christendom* — *in fundamental and liberal circles alike.
In relation to the Word of the Kingdom, one segment is JUST as leavened as the other. In relation to the Word of the Kingdom, EXACTLY the same conditions exist in both. Neither proclaims this message, and neither will have anything to do with it.
This is the ONE thing which both the fundamentalists and the liberals (as they are known and referred to) have in common today. Neither will proclaim or have anything to do with the central message which Christians are to hear.*
When Christ was on earth the first time, there were two main religious parties in Israel — the Pharisees and the Sadducees (the fundamentalists and the liberals of that day). These two religious parties were *worlds apart* in their theology, but they were *ONE in their attitude toward the message surrounding the proffered kingdom. Neither would have anything to do with it.*
And exactly the same situation exists in Christendom today, immediately preceding Christ’s return. There are two main divisions among Christians — the fundamentalists and the liberals. These two religious groups are *worlds apart* in their theology, but they are *ONE in their attitude toward the proffered kingdom. Neither will have anything to do with it.*

*1) From Ephesus…*

Revelation chapters two and three record seven short epistles to seven Churches in Asia. These epistles were given in a certain order, beginning with the Church in Ephesus and ending with the Church in Laodicea. And a longer epistle to one of the seven exists elsewhere in the New Testament — tothe first Church mentioned,the Church in Ephesus.

Reference is made in Col. 4:16 to an epistle in connection with the Church in Laodicea. But this is not stated to be an epistle written to that Church (though if it were, it would have to be viewed as a non-canonical epistle which was not preserved and passed down). Rather, it is simply an unidentified epistle (possibly one which Paul had written from this location); and this epistle, in possession of the Christians in Laodicea, was to be obtained by the Christians in Colossae from those in Laodicea.

Paul had spent three years ministering to the Christians in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). When he came to Ephesus the first time, he was accom- panied by Aquila and Priscilla (whom, it is apparent, he had instructed in *the faith*). He remained in Ephesus an unrevealed period of time, reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue. Then he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus in order to return to Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-21).

It was during Paul’s second visit to Ephesus that he spent most of the three-year period which he mentions in Acts 20:31 (*cf.*Acts 19:10ff). On this second visit, Paul found disciples who were not familiar with the fact that God had called an entirely new entity — *the one new man* “in Christ” — into existence. These disciples knew only “the baptism of John,” something which they had apparently learned from Apollos before he received further instruction in the matter from Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 19:1-7; *cf.* Acts 18:24-26).

And Paul began his ministry in Ephesus at this time by providing further instruction for these individuals, as Aquila and Priscilla had provided for Apollos. Then Paul continued his ministry in Ephesus by going “from house to house,” *teaching the people, keeping nothing back that was not profitable for them* (Acts 20:20). In this respect, Paul’s ministry in Ephesus would seemingly form a pattern concerning the manner in which his entire ministry in the Gentile world was to be conducted.

Paul had earlier been converted and subsequently taken aside — apparently into Arabia, then evidently into the Lord’s presence in heaven — where the Lord personally revealed to him what is called in Scripture, “the mystery” (II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11, 12, 16, 17; Eph. 3:1-11).

“The mystery” had to do with the new entity, *the new creation*“in Christ,” *the Church;* it had to do with both Jews and Gentiles being joint-heirs together, in one body; and it had to do with those comprising this new entity being the recipients of the kingdom which Israel had rejected — the kingdom of the heavens (*cf.*Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

This is the message which Paul had been taught by the Lord, and this is the message which he was to carry throughout the Gentile world. This though was a message for Christians, not a message for the unsaved; and there were very few Christians in the Gentile world when Paul went out with this message. Thus, Paul, in the process of carrying out his ministry, had to proclaim a dual message.

Paul, among the unsaved, had to proclaim *the good news surrounding the grace of God.* Then, once individuals had been saved, Paul could proclaim *the good news surrounding the coming glory of Christ.* And the latter, rather than the former, is that which is seen in Scripture forming the heart of Paul’s ministry.

This is why Scripture presents Paul’s ministry — outlined in the latter half of the Book of Acts, and in his epistles — as dealing *far more extensively* with things surrounding “the mystery” than with things surrounding the simple gospel of the grace of God.

It is plain from Paul’s last meeting with the elders in the Church in Ephesus that “in every city” which he entered (which included Ephesus) he proclaimed “the gospel of the grace of God”; but it is also clear that Paul, in these same cities, then went on to proclaim “the kingdom of God” to those who had been saved under the simple preaching of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24, 25).

And the three years Paul spent in Ephesus are specifically said to be time which he spent *instructing Christians in the faith*and *warning them about false teachers who would arise in their midst*(Acts 20:28-32).

Note the preceding sequence in Paul’s ministry, seen in these verses in Acts 20:24-32:

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the min- istry, which I received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify*the gospel of the grace of God.*

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching *the kingdom of God,* shall see my face no more.
Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God.*
Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.
And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

Then, the epistle which he later wrote to those in Ephesus, shows *the depth* to which he had previously instructed the Christians in that city. This epistle begins (apart from foundational teachings, and really, apart from any introductory teachings) with a discussion of the things which would be realized “in the dispensation of the fulness of times” — adoption, redemption, and an inheritance (1:3-14). Thus, this epistle begins and continues with*the assumption that the Christians in Ephesus were well-grounded in the faith.*

Paul could begin and continue this way because of the apparent spiritual maturity of these Christians, resulting from his previous lengthy ministry in their midst. And Paul’s unceasing prayer for these Christians at the time he wrote this epistle was that God would give them *wisdom*and*full knowledge* (Gk., *epignosis*) concerning the things he was writing about (things which he had previously taught them), referred to as “the hope of his calling,” and “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (1:16-18).

Then Paul continues in chapter two, showing *the reason for their salvation*, the reason these Christians in Ephesus had passed “from death unto life” (vv. 1-10). And the thoughtof saved Jews and Gentiles, seen together in one body in this chapter (vv. 15, 16), merges into a discussion of “the mystery” in chapter three (vv. 1-11).

And Paul, calling attention to “the mystery,” continues with the thought of *an inheritance* set before Christians, for a future inheritance is what the mystery has to do with. It has to do with Gentiles being “fellowheirs” with Jews, “of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (v. 6). And Paul refers to the whole of the message surrounding the mystery as “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and “the manifold wisdom of God” (vv. 8, 10) — something which the writer of Hebrews presented as realized in that which he called “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3), or which Peter referred to as “the greatest of precious promises,” connected with Christ’s “greatest [regal] mag- nificence” (II Peter 1:4, 16 [literal translation]).

In the first part of chapter four, Paul dealt with the reason for gifted leaders and teachers in the Church.
Simply stated, God had placed gifted leaders and teachers in the Church in Ephesus, and elsewhere, to guide Christians as they moved from immaturity to maturity; and this was with *a view to the future adoption, redemption, and inheritance awaiting Christians* (*cf.*Eph. 4:11-14, 30).
Then the Christians’ walk comes into view as individuals move from immaturity to maturity. And this takes up the remainder of the epistle, with a warning at the end to clothe oneself with “the whole armour of God” because of the ongoing spiritual warfare against Satan and his angels (6:10ff).
The Church in Ephesus was filled with Christians who were well-versed in *the Word of the Kingdom.* And well they should have been, for Paul had spent a great deal of time with them, going ”from house to house,” teaching them — something which had allowed him to be able to later write a letter to these Christians and simply begin discussing “the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10), *completely apart from introductory, foundational teachings.*
And it was *this Church* which the Lord chose to use in His revelation to John in order to show the state of Christendom at the beginning of the dispensation.
*This was a time when the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ was proclaimed throughout Christendom, when this message was received and understood by Christians throughout the Churches* (Col. 1:5, 6, 23).
During these early years, this was *the message of the hour* when Christians met. *This was the central message proclaimed by Paul and other ministers of that day, the central message of all the letters (epistles) written to the different Churches and individuals during that time.*
And Christians during these days gathered to talk about the things having to do with the coming kingdom of Christ, *encouraging and exhorting one another relative to the hope set before them* (Heb. 10:23-25).
*BUT, something happened!*
A*foreign substance was placed in the three measures of meal. And it wasn’t long before things began to go awry, even in the Church in Ephesus.*

Note that which Scripture states in this respect, as recorded in Rev. 2:2-4:

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.
Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, *because thou hast left thy first love.”*

The corruption which Satan introduced *began* and *continued* to cause deterioration in Christendom. It *BEGAN* in the manner depicted in the first of the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3, the Church in Ephesus; and it would *CONTINUE UNTIL* it had brought about conditions in Christendom as depicted in the last of the seven Churches in these two chapters in the Book of Revelation, the Church in Laodicea.

*2) To Laodicea*
From a Biblical standpoint, *ONE thing about Christendom is CER
TAIN! And this ONE thing CANNOT be denied!
Christendom, near the end of the dispensation, is going to appear in the
world in a COMPLETELY leavened state.
This is something which Christ revealed to His disciples before the Church
was ever brought into existence, and this is something which He revealed
again to John at a time after the Church had been brought into existence. The record of Church history was given before the dispensation began,
and the record of Church history was given once again during the early years
of the dispensation.*
And man today — living during the closing years of the dispensation, viewing both the history and current state of Christendom — *can
know EXACTLY why the whole of Christendom exists in its present condition. According to the clear teaching of the Word of God, relative to any proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom near the end of the dispensation, ALL
Christendom will have become completely saturated with leaven, with that
which is false. Relative to any proclamation of this message near the end of
the dispensation, ALL Christendom will have become completely corrupted.*

It is not a pretty picture. Corruption never is. *This though is what the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the final state of Christendom during Man’s Day.*

And, for those believing what the Word of God has to say on the subject, this has to be *the end of the matter.* This is not something open to discussion or debate. This is *a settled matter,* clearly revealed by Christ at two different places in Scripture where a history of Christendom is given. *And this revealed history of Christendom is recorded these two times, in two different ways, for all to see.*

In the second of these two times — in Revelation chapters two and three — as previously seen, the Lord revealed this final state of Chris- tendom through referring to conditions in the Church in Laodicea, a Church which had become completely corrupted even before the end of the first century. And, if one desires to study about the Church of of the first century. And, if one desires to study about the Church of 21. This is a description given by Christ Himself; and this description, in complete keeping with that seen in the parable of the leaven in Matt. 13:33, *vividly depicts the true nature of the Church at the end of the dispensation* — “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v. 17b).

But, again, bear one thing in mind. This does not picture Christendom at the end of the dispensation in *a general sense. Rather, something SPECIFIC is in view.*

This presents Christendom at the end of the dispensation in relation to *an outlook on a PARTICULAR facet of Biblical doctrine* — the attitude of Christians throughout the Churches toward that which very few of them seem to know anything whatsoever about, *the Word of the Kingdom, that upon which the leaven is seen to have centered its attack.*

And this whole overall thought of the leaven centering its attack at this point is something easily seen throughout the seven epistles to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3. Each epistle is structured *EXACTLY the same way, centering around works, with a view to overcoming.*

Thus, the statement to each Church is twofold in this respect:
*1) “I know thy works…” (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). 2) “To him that overcometh…” (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).*

These are the two inseparable and interrelated things around which the Word of the Kingdom centers — *works, with a view to overcoming.* And all of the overcomer’s promises project matters out into *the Messianic Era.*

And when the Lord called attention to the Laodicean Church as being “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” He was presenting a picture of the Church at the end of the dispensation in relation to that which was in view — *works, with a view to overcoming.* And the counsel which the Lord gave the Church in this condition was quite clear:

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18).

Thus, the Church near the end of the dispensation, in relation to teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom, will be in the condi- tion depicted by the Laodicean Church. It will be*completely corrupted.*

And *ALL one needs to do to see the truth of the matter* is go into practically any Church throughout the country today — fundamental or liberal, *it makes NO difference* — *and listen for ANY reference to teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.*

*One will listen in VAIN, for the message is simply NOT being taught. The leaven has done its damaging work too well.*
**If Any Man…**

So, what is the Christian who understands the Word of the King - dom to do in surroundings of this nature today? He finds himself in the midst of Christians who know little to nothing about the subject; he finds himself in the midst of Christians who reject, or make light of the Word of the Kingdom. And he can’t really leave and go elsewhere, for the leaven, working for almost two millenniums, has brought the whole of Christendom into this same state.

The answer concerning that which he is to do is given at the end of the short epistle to the Church in Laodicea. The Lord knew exactly how conditions would exist at the end of this leavening process. And, with this in view, those in the Laodicean Church were exhorted to follow a particular course of action within this Church.

Note Christ’s closing words to these Christians:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
To him that overcometh…” (vv. 19-21a).

In relation to *the central message* which Christians are to hear throughout the dispensation, Christ, at the end of the dispensation, is pictured *outside the Church, knocking, seeking admission to those inside.* And the invitation which Christ extends at this time is *to individual Christians* rather than to the Church as a whole, for the Church will have been permeated through and through with a leavening substance which can only continue its deteriorating work.

The invitation, seen in this passage, extends *to ANY individual* in the Church: “If *ANY man* hear my voice, and open the door…”
The person is not told to leave the Church, for, again, *there is NO place for him to go; the WHOLE will have become leavened.* Rather, the person is to remain where he is and heed the Lord’s message. Then, the Lord will come*inside, to that individual, with fellowship in the Word following.*
There will be fellowship between Christ and that individual (“… and will sup with him”), and there will be fellowship between that individual and Christ (“…and he with me” [v. 20b; *cf.* I John 1:3).
But for the other Christians in the Church, Christ will remain *outside the door, though the invitation will remain open.*
And one need only look at *Christianity in the world today*to see the Church in the condition set forth by the end result of the progression of that depicted in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen or in the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.
The Church today, in relation to *the proclamation of The Word of the Kingdom,* finds itself in*an evident completely leavened state, with Christ outside the door, exhorting individual Christians to heed the truth of that which Satan has fought so hard to destroy.*

7

Some Shall Depart

***A Departure of Christians from the Faith***

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (I Tim. 4:1-3).

God’s creation of the material universe and the establishment of His universal government preceded the creation of man by at least one age, possibly by a number of ages. The length of this period of time is completely unrevealed in Scripture, and the only events occurring throughout this period which God has seen fit to reveal to man in His Word are events having a direct bearing upon the reason for man’s existence on the earth.

Scripture reveals God’s original establishment of the government of the earth (Ezek. 28:14) — a province in God’s universal kingdom — the fall and disqualification of the earth’s first ruler (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:15), and both the immediate and far-reaching results of the fall and disqualification of this ruler (*cf.* Gen. 1:2a; Isa. 14:15-17; Jer. 4:23-28; Ezek. 28:16-19).

The immediate result was *a ruined kingdom* — a kingdom *becoming* “without form, and void,” with *darkness* covering “the face of the deep [‘raging waters’ covering the darkened, ruined kingdom]” (Gen. 1:2a).

And the far-reaching results — still future today — will be *a removal* of the incumbent ruler from his appointed position of power and authority and his eventual *consignment* to a prepared “lake of fire” (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

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God revealed these things about Satan and the earth in order that man would be able to clearly see and understand the reason for his existence. God’s creation of the material universe, His establishment of a universal government, the subsequent rebellion of one provincial ruler within this established government (the rebellion of Satan, with a segment of his angels), and the resulting ruin of Satan’s kingdom (the earth), all preceded and anticipated man’s creation.

And not only has God revealed these things, but He has also revealed the end of the matter. He has also revealed that which will occur relative to Satan and his kingdom *after*man takes the sceptre.

But, viewing the matter from the beginning, man was not to rule over a kingdom lying in ruins. The earth, which *had become* “without form and void” when God’s original appointed ruler sought to exalt his throne (Gen. 1:2a), was *restored* immediately prior to man’s creation (Gen. 1:2b-25).

God restored the ruined material creation with a view to *a new provincial ruler* — man — taking the sceptre. And this is something which He revealed immediately following the earth’s restoration:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and *let them have dominion…”* (Gen. 1:26; *cf.*vv. 27ff).

Thus, God not only clearly revealed His reason for the restoration of the ruined material creation but also His reason for the creation of man. The material creation had been restored for man, and man was about to be brought into existence to replace the incumbent ruler and those ruling with him (Satan and his angels).

And, with God’s statement to this effect, note two *established, unchangeable facts* concerning man, revealed immediately preceding his creation:

*1) Man was to be brought into existence to rule the earth.
2) This rule would be realized in conjunction with a woman, who would be formed from a part of the man following His creation*(*cf.*vv. 27, 28).

God said, prior to man’s creation, “…let *them* have dominion [*the man and the woman together*]…” (vv. 26-28). Then, Genesis chapter two provides a number of details concerning man’s creation (v. 7), the removal of a rib from Adam which God used to make the woman (vv. 21, 22), and the relationship of the woman to the man (vv. 23, 24).

This is the way God established matters in the beginning, and that which God established in the beginning *DOES NOT change, it CANNOT change, as one moves through Scripture.*

At *ANY point in Scripture*, following that which God established and revealed in the opening two chapter of Genesis, the man and the woman are seen occupying *this SAME inseparable relationship together — a regal relationship, having to do with the government of the earth.*

It matters not whether it’s a man and wife in their fallen state, God and Israel, or Christ and the Church, *this established relationship holds.
It MUST hold, for God Himself established this relationship.*
The man and wife are to presently be “heirs together of the grace of life” and foreshadow, within this God-established relationship existing during Man’s Day, the future relationship which will exist between Christ and His wife in the Lord’s Day (Eph. 5:21-33; I Peter 3:7).
God took Israel as *His wife* in the Old Testament theocracy. God had to possess a wife in order to reign in the theocracy, for that is the manner in which He Himself established matters in the beginning.
God later divorced Israel because of harlotry. But, in the future restored theocracy, God will have remarried Israel (*cf.* Isa. 1:21-2:5; Jer. 3:1ff; Hosea 2:2, 3; 14:1ff; Rev. 19:1-6).
After the same manner, Christ will one day take *a wife.* The Spirit of God is in the world today searching for a bride for God’s Son, *for the Son CAN’T reign apart from possessing a wife.
Again, this is a matter established by God in the beginning, and it CANNOT change* (Gen. 24:1ff; Eph. 5:21-33; Rev. 19:7-9).
Understanding this established relationship will explain both Satan’s initial action and Adam’s resulting subsequent action in Genesis chapter three.
Satan knew full-well the reason man had been created, with the woman removed from the man; and he also knew full-well the relationship existing between the man and the woman.
He knew that Adam *couldn’t* rule apart from Eve. And, knowing this, he directed his efforts toward the woman, seeking to bring her into a state in which she *couldn’t* rule.
Satan deceived Eve into eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, contrary to God’s command. And once Eve had disobeyed God, she was no longer in a position to rule with Adam, which meant that Adam couldn’t rule. A part of Adam’s very being — *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh* (2:23) — was no longer in a position to rule, preventing him from ruling.
Thus, Adam, in this condition — *an incomplete being* — *was left with only ONE choice. Eve had to be redeemed.* And there was only *ONE way in which this could be done.*
Adam, taking the only course available, partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as well (Adam could only drop to Eve’s level, not she rise to his). And Adam did this with a view to *redemption* and his one day being able to occupy, *as a complete being* (the man and woman together), the position for which God had created man.
Comparing type and antitype, all of this can be clearly seen.
The second Man, the last Adam, found His bride in the same fallen state; and He took *the only course available.* He Who knew no sin was made sin for us “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).
As the first man, the first Adam, couldn’t reign apart from the one in a fallen state — his wife — neither can the second Man, the last Adam. And since man is to ultimately realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning,*it MUST be recognized that both the first Adam and the last Adam took the ONLY course available as it pertains to the reason for man’s existence and the sin question.*
To properly understand the actions of either Adam in Eden or Christ at Calvary, *one account MUST be studied in the light of the other. That is to say, type and antitype MUST be studied together.*
Man’s redemption — wrought through Christ’s finished work at Calvary — has its direct connection with that revealed in Genesis surrounding the reason for man’s creation, Eve’s subsequent fall because of Satan’s deception, and Adam’s resulting subsequent act. “Salvation” in Scripture is connected with *regality, NOT as man often presents the matter, with a rescue or deliverance from the lake of fire.*
Though the lake of fire *does await* individuals rejecting Christ’s finished work at Calvary, viewing salvation with respect to a deliv- erance from the lake of fire is really *NOT the correct Biblical approach.*
The lake of fire was prepared for “the devil and his angels,” *not for man*(Matt. 25:41). It was prepared for the ones originally ruling the earth *who rebelled against God’s supreme regal power and authority.*
In this respect, the lake of fire has its connective origin *with regality as it pertains to the earth —*the same as the purpose for man’s salvation. And this connective origin of the lake of fire with regality and the earth is why man, rejecting God’s remedy for sin, will end up in this place.
Fallen man will have rejected that which has to do *first and foremost with regality and the earth.*He will have rejected *a salvation which finds its revealed purpose in the reason for man’s creation and subsequent fall.*
And man, rejecting a salvation of this nature, is doing little more than *rebelling against God’s supreme regal power and authority*— the same as Satan and his angels had done, though after a different fashion.
Thus, though the lake of fire was originally prepared for angelic beings who had rebelled against God’s supreme regal power and authority, man, also rebelling in a manner which has to do with regality and the earth, will be cast therein as well.

**Doctrines of Demons**

The “doctrines of demons” in the text from I Tim. 4:1-3 would involve a counterfeit parallel to *the truth* presented in the Word of God.
God has *His deep things,* and Satan has *his deep things* (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24). And the latter, as it is presented in Scripture, is simply *a corruption* of the former. It is taking the former, remaining within the same framework as the former, and producing *a counterfeit, a corrupted parallel.*
For example, *Scripture BEGINS with a foundational framework (Gen. 1:1-2:3), providing an unchangeable pattern for the whole of that which God was about to lay out in His Word*(Gen. 2:4ff).
And *Satan begins at the SAME point, providing a corrupted parallel to that which God has laid out in His Word* (*cf.* II Peter 3:3-8).
Satan not only has his corrupted parallel relative to salvation by grace through faith (Gen. 1:2b-5), but he has his corrupted parallel relative to present and future aspects of salvation as well — the salvation of the soul (Gen. 1:6ff). And, as God in His Word places the emphasis on present and future aspects of salvation (not only in Gen. 1:1-2:3, but also in the remainder of Scripture), so does Satan in his counterfeit parallel. And, as God in His Word reveals a specific goal for man’s sal- vation (not only in Gen. 1:1-2:3, but also in the remainder of Scripture), Satan seeks to entirely corrupt this teaching in his counterfeit parallel.
Satan places *the emphasis* where God has placed *the emphasis,* and he seeks to set forth *a counterfeit* at the same points God has set forth *the truth* (*cf.* Isa. 14:13, 14). He has taken God’s *truth*and introduced *error*in his efforts to mislead the masses.

(A good counterfeit will approximate the original as closely as possible; and, as with any good counterfeit, it is easier to mislead the masses in this manner [*cf.* II Cor. 11:13-15].)

Then note that God’s Word is directed to *the saved, NOT the unsaved.* The unsaved are “dead in trespasses and sins” and *CANNOT* understand this Word (Eph. 2:1; *cf.* I Cor. 2:14).

And so it is with Satan and his counterfeit parallels. These counterfeit teachings have been designed for *those who have “passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24). Those “dead in trespasses and sins” are in *NO* position to understand spiritual issues — whether “corrupted” (emanating from Satan) or “uncorrupted” (emanating from God).

*Both fall completely outside the realm of the natural (the soulical).* Such a corruption of the truth, received by the saved, can easily be seen in the text from I Timothy, where Paul sounded a warning. Paul foretold a departure from “the faith” where some Christians would begin giving heed to “seducing spirits” rather than to God’s Word; and these seducing spirits would teach that which was untrue, specifically referred to in the text as the “doctrines of demons.”
These Christians’ spiritual awareness would become seared (Gk., *kausteriazo;*Eng., “cauterize” — to burn, as with a hot iron, to the point of destroying that being burned), resulting in a departure from “the faith.”
And, relative to “the faith” from which they had departed, they would begin proclaiming that which was false, that which was in line with the “doctrines of demons.” *They would begin proclaiming a message opposed to that which the Word of God had to say about two things in I Tim. 4:1-3:*

*1) Marriage.
2) Meats*.

“Marriage” points to a work occurring during Man’s Day (with the truth surrounding the matter established before and at the time of man’s creation), which would be brought to fruition and realized in the future Lord’s Day; and “meats” has to do with that part of Bibli- cal doctrine which centers around this overall subject (vv. 6, 13, 16).

And those seen being misled in I Tim. 4:1-3, “in the latter times” by “seducing spirits,” resulting in their proclaiming “doctrines of demons,” are seen, “standing in the way of marriage…” (literal thought from the Greek text [v. 3a]) and are referred to as *apostates.*

Further, a misleading of individuals after this fashion is presented in a very specific and limited sense in Scripture. It is presented specifically as and limited to *an apostasy from the faith — nothing more, nothing less.*

*1) Apostasy from the Faith*
“Apostasy” has to do with *standing away from a position previously
held,*and “the faith” is an expression which encompasses the whole
of a specific part of the Word of God (actually, *the central teaching*) —
“the Word of the Kingdom.”
The Spirit of God, revealing through Paul *the central message* which
Christians were to be taught, explicitly singled out that which would occur “in the latter times” in Christendom relative to this central message. In short, there would be *a departure from this central message;*and
that associated with *the doctrines of demons would, instead, be taught.*

*a) Apostasy*

The word “depart” in I Tim. 4:1 is a translation of the Greek word, *aphistemi,* which is the verb form of the noun, *apostasia.* And *apostasia* is the word from which our English word “apostasy” is derived. The English word “apostasy” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *apostasia.*Accordingly, to understand that which is meant by “apostasy,” the Greek word needs to be referenced.

*Apostasia* is a compound word comprised of *apo* and *stasis. Apo* means “from,” and *stasis* means “to stand.” Thus, the literal meaning of the word is “to stand from,” or “to stand away from.”

An apostate, in the true sense of the word, is simply *someone standing away from, departing from, a position previously held.*
In I Tim. 4:1, the departure from the previously held position is specifically stated to pertain to “the faith.” That is, seducing spirits, promulgating the doctrines of demons, are seen leading individuals adhering to “the faith” (of necessity, Christians, not unsaved individuals [I Cor. 2:14]) away from this position.

*b) The Faith*

*The central thrust* surrounding the truth of the matter, derived from the Word of God, has to do with “the faith.” And *the central thrust* surrounding that which is false, derived from the doctrines of demons, also has to do with “the faith.” One emanates from “the deep things of God,” and the other emanates from “the depths [*lit.,* ‘the deep things’] of Satan” (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24). The former is *the Truth;* the latter is *a corrupted, counterfeit parallel to the Truth.*

“The faith” is an expression peculiarly related in Scripture to the overall scope of *the Word of the Kingdom, to the mystery revealed to Paul, to the gospel of the glory of Christ, to the salvation of the soul.* This is the manner in which the expression appears in numerous New Testament references — in the Gospels, in the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles (both Pauline and General).

Christ, during the course of His earthly ministry, at His first com - ing, looked 2,000 years ahead to His second coming, and, through a question, called attention to a solitary fact concerning *the central message of the New Testament.* Christ asked, “...when the Son of man [a Messianic title] cometh, shall he find faith [*lit.,* ‘the faith’] on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). And the manner in which the question is worded in the Greek text designates *a negative answer.*

The Son of Man *will NOT* find “the faith” being taught in Chris- tendom at the time of His return. The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 (having to do with the doctrines of demons) will have taken care of that.

Now, if the expression, “the faith,” refers to that held by fundamental Christendom today (the whole of man’s categorization of fundamental doctrines; *e.g.,* the virgin birth, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, salvation by grace through faith, etc.) — as commonly taught — then a major problem exists.

“Fundamentalism,” in the preceding respect, is presently *a major force in Christendom;*and “ the faith” would be something held to and proclaimed throughout a rather large segment of Christendom. Thus, if “the faith” is to be understood as a reference to *the body of Biblical doctrines,* as held by those recognized as “fundamental Christians,” *then conditions in Christendom are such that Christ cannot return during the present time.*

Fundamentalism of this nature is *presently alive and well in Christendom.* In fact, it is actually *a growing force in numerous quarters.*Millions of Christians in this country alone would fall within the mainstream of fundamentalism and adhere to this body of Biblical doctrine.

But the preceding is really neither here nor there, for, when one looks to Scripture for its own definition of “the faith,” something completely different is seen. Scripture uses this expression in a very limited sense. Scripture uses this expression in contexts having to do with *the Word of the Kingdom,* not in contexts having to do with the complete body of fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

Doctrines of “the faith,” in the preceding respect, in actuality, represent that which man has attempted to categorize as he has looked at the Scriptures, not doctrines seen through allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. To take the Biblical expression, “the faith,” and attempt to identify it with man’s categorization of doctrine (a list of Biblical doctrines) is *the height of folly in Scriptural interpretation.*

Scripture is *ALWAYS* to be interpreted in the light of Scripture (I Cor. 2:9-13). And this is *EXACTLY* the way in which the expression, “the faith,” *MUST be understood.*

Scripture *MUST be allowed to explain that which is meant by the expression.* It is an expression which is used over and over in Scripture. And the interesting thing is that Scripture not only clearly explains how this expression is used, but it does so in numerous instances.

Paul, for example, in his first letter to Timothy, following his warning concerning the apostates, said:

“Fight the good fight of *[the] faith,*lay hold on eternal life [*lit.,* ‘Strive in the good contest of *the faith,* lay hold on life for the age’], whereunto thou art also called…” (6:12).

And, in Paul’s second letter to Timothy, a similar usage is again seen:
“I have fought a good fight [*lit.,* ‘I have strived in the good contest’],

I have finished my course, I have kept *the faith:*
Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness…”
(4:7, 8).

Or, when Jude sought to write an epistle relative to “the common salvation [the good news concerning salvation by grace through faith, *a subject which NONE of the epistles centers on*],” the Spirit of God led him to write on an entirely different subject.

The Spirit of God led Jude to write an epistle exhorting Christians to “earnestly contend [*lit.,* ‘earnestly strive’] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints [the good news concerning salvation in relation to the coming glory of Christ, something seen as central in the subject matter of all the epistles]” (v. 3).

Thewords“fight”(ITim.6:12),“fought”(IITim.4:7),and“contend” (Jude 3) are translations of the same word in the Greek text — *agonizomai,* the word from which our English word, “agonize,” is derived.

In Jude though, the word has been intensified through the writer prefixing the Greek preposition *epi* to the word, forming *epagonizomai.*Thus, the correct translation would be, “earnestly strive…”

In all three of the preceding passages, the thought, through the use of *agonizomai,* has to do with*straining every muscle of one’s being relative to “the faith.”*

In the first two references (from I, II Timothy), the picture is that of an athletic contest. Christians are to *strain every muscle of their being in the present race of “the faith” in which they find themselves engaged.*

Then Jude, in the face of apostasy relative to “the faith,” still remaining within the thought of an athletic contest, *intensified the word.*Jude, because of *apostasy* among Christians relative to “the faith” — Christians giving heed to seducing spirits, teaching the doctrines of demons (something also spoken of by Christ, Paul, and Peter) — *intensified* the thought of striving in his exhortation. He, in essence, exhorted Christians, while running the race of “the faith,” *to be especially and particularly on guard because of the apostates.*

And it is apparent that Jude, *with a view to the apostates,* intensified this word because of the specific nature of apostasy, because of the realm in which the apostates had centered their teachings — seeking to mislead Christians relative to “the faith,” seeking to draw Christians away from the central teaching of Scripture.

The “doctrines of demons,” promulgated by the apostates, is *the most dangerous and deadly teaching that has ever been proclaimed or ever will be proclaimed in Christian circles.*And, because of this, Jude exhorted Christians *to strain every muscle of their being in the race of “the faith.”*

The preceding would form only a few examples of the way in which the expression, “the faith,” is used in the New Testament.
Other examples would be the conversion of priests in Israel during the re-offer of the kingdom, who were then “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7), disciples exhorted “to continue in the faith” relative to *entrance into the kingdom* (Acts 14:22), Paul proclaiming “the faith” which he had once sought to destroy (Gal. 1:23; *cf.*Eph. 6:16; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23; 2:7; I Thess. 5:8; II Thess. 1:4, 11; I Tim. 1:2, 19b; 5:8; 6:10, 21; II Tim. 2:18; 3:8; 4:7), and the usage of the expression in the general epistles (*cf.* Heb. 12:2; James 1:3; 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26; I Peter 1:7, 9).
“Faith” is *articular in the Greek text in each of the preceding references.*
Thus, there is a uniform usage of this expression throughout the New Testament. And, though it doesn’t have to do with the body of Biblical doctrine held by those forming “fundamental Christendom,” it does have to do with a body of Biblical doctrine.
It has to do with that body of Biblical doctrine rejected by Christendom at large — fundamentalists and liberals alike. It has to do with that body of Biblical doctrine referred to various ways in Scripture — *the Word of the Kingdom, the mystery, Paul’s gospel, the gospel of the glory of Christ, etc.*

*2) Marriage, Meats*

Foundational principals and Biblical doctrine surrounding the marriage relationship have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis. And, any time one finds the man and the woman together beyond this point — whether during Man’s Day or during the coming Lord’s Day — *rulership is in view.*

Or, to present the truth of the matter from another perspective, turn the statement around. Any time one finds *rulership* in view beyond the opening chapters of Genesis (relative to man), a husband-wife relationship *MUST*also be in view.

This is why Israel is seen as *the wife of Jehovah* in the Old Testament theocracy — a wife later seen as *an adulterous wife,* resulting in God divorcing Israel — with God then, *of necessity,* ending the Old Testament theocracy (*cf.* Jer. 3:1-14; Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23). And this is why, before a theocracy can be established on the earth yet future, *Israel has to be cleansed and restored to her former place, as the wife of Jehovah.*

*A Husband-wife relationship MUST exist at this time.*
This is also why Christ is to have*a wife* yet future. If Christ is to reign over the earth as the second Man, the last Adam, He *MUST have a consort queen* to reign with Him. *This is why a marriage MUST occur prior to the time He reigns.
A Husband-wife relationship MUST exist at this time.*
And further, this is why the husband-wife relationship today, during Man’s Day, is dealt with in Scripture in connection with *an heirship together* (I Peter 3:7). There is a present *reigning in life,*seen in the marriage relationship; and this is at the heart of that which Paul refers to as “a great mystery” relative to “Christ and the Church” in Eph. 5:21-33.
There are two books in the Old Testament which bear the names of women. One is “Ruth,” and the other is “Esther.” And, interest- ingly enough, no one knows who wrote either book. The Book of Ruth presents one aspect of this overall matter, and the Book of Esther presents the other.
The Book of Ruth has to do with *a Gentile who marries a Jew, with a redeemed inheritance in view.* Ruth, in her marriage to Boaz, sets forth truths surrounding *Christ and His wife* yet future. And the entire Book of Ruth sets forth the overall scope of the matter from beginning to end, *with the husband-wife relationship*, *in connection with the inheritance*, being brought to the forefront in the end.
The Book of Esther then presents the matter as it relates to *God and Israel.* Esther was a Jew whom King Ahasuerus (who was not a Jew [note that it is God’s Son Who is a Jew and will so remain throughout eternity, not the Father]) had taken as his wife following the former queen’s (Vashti’s) refusal to fulfill her role as the king’s wife (1:9ff).
Then the remainder of the book revolves around Israel in the latter days (Haman typifying Antichrist), the end of Gentile world power, and Israel restored to the nation’s rightful place as *the wife of Jehovah, with an inheritance in view* (2:17ff).

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s books, *Ruth* and *Esther*. Also see Chapters VIII, IX in this book.)

Thus, the whole of that seen in the marriage relationship beyond Gen. 1:26-28 (along with that revealed in chapter two) rests on these foundational verses in Genesis. The husband-wife relationship today has its basis in the past(Gen. 1:26ff) and points to the future (Rev. 19:7ff).

And whether it is Israel on the earth or the Church in the heavens, *there can be no future reign over the earth apart from this relationship existing between God and Israel and between Christ and the Church.*

**Ministry of the Spirit Today**

Understanding the preceding will allow one to clearly understand that which God revealed concerning Israel and the Church in Genesis chapters twenty-two through twenty-five. In these four chapters, God, through Moses, revealed things concerning both *the wife of Jehovah* and *the wife of Christ;*and this was based on that revealed in the first three chapters of Genesis, but with a view to the goal of the matter in the future Lord’s Day. And God set all of this forth long before He brought either Israel or the Church into existence (*cf.* Isa. 46:9, 10).

The ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation is seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four, fifteen hundred years before it even began. Events in this chapter — Abraham sending his eldest servant into the far country to obtain a bride for His son, typifying God sending the Spirit into the world to obtain a bride for His Son — occurred *following*the offering of Isaac (ch. 22) and the death of Sarah (ch. 23), but *before*the remarriage of Abraham (ch. 25).

That is to say, the ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation occurs *following* the events of Calvary (ch. 22) and the setting aside of Israel (ch. 23), but *before*the time God restores Israel as His wife (ch. 25). And further, the ministry of the Spirit in the world today, as seen in the type in Genesis chapter twenty-four, is clearly revealed to be that of *obtaining a bride for God’s Son.*

And, in line with the preceding, any facet of the Spirit’s work during the time of His mission — whether it be among the unsaved (effecting life, based on the finished work of the Son) or among the saved (leading saved individuals “into all truth,” from *gnosis* to *epignosis* [from immaturity to maturity]) — must center around His revealed mission, as seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.

The reason why God sent the Spirit into the world to accomplish such a mission is easy to see and understand if one keeps in mind the God-established issues surrounding the husband-wife relationship.

*The Son MUST have a wife if He is to reign. And Christians as well — anticipating the Son’s reign — CANNOT reign apart from this same relationship.*

The coming millennial reign of the Son will be a theocracy wherein God the Father will have *a wife on earth* (seen in the type in Gen. 25) and the Son will have *a wife in the heavens above the earth* (a wife presently being procured through the work of the Spirit, seen in the type in Gen. 24).

And in order for any individual from the human race to rule and reign in that coming day, *that person will have to be a part of either the wife of Jehovah on the earth or the wife of the Son in the heavens.*

*There can be NO rule and reign for anyone — man, or God’s Son — apart from this established, Husband-wife relationship.*
The preceding is why “marriage” and “meats” are singled out in I Tim. 4:3. The marriage relationship today is based on that which God established in past time, and reflects on that which will ultimately be brought into full fruition during future time.
And it matters not whether the word “marriage” in this verse is understood in a literal sense (referring to the marriage relationship today) or in a spiritual sense (referring to Christ and His wife yet future), *the SAME thing* is still being dealt with. A husband-wife relationship today is based on that which God established in the past and directly reflects on that which He will bring to fruition yet future. It directly reflects on Christ and His wife yet future.
And the preceding is why any corruption of the marriage relationship by man (adultery, homosexuality, etc.) is dealt with so severely in Scripture. Any deviation from that which God established is *a corruption, with far-reaching ramifications.*
Marriage, as established by God, has to do with *regality;*and this *regality* is to be realized in its ultimate sense during the coming Mes- sianic Era. All of man’s corruptions are simply offshoots of Satan’s attempted, multi-faceted corruption surrounding the whole panorama of Biblical doctrine (“meats”) pertaining to the marriage relationship.

8

Christ and the Church

***Seen in the Typology of Boaz and Ruth***

“Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess…
And Boaz said unto the Elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi.
Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife…
So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife…” (Ruth 4:5a, 9, 10a, 13a).

A major, necessary key to understand the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen (vv. 44-46), which Christ gave once He had reentered the house (v. 36), is seen in understanding *marriage* as it occurs in both type and antitype in Scripture.

1) As it occurred with Boaz and Ruth, Ahasuerus and Esther.
2) As it will occur with Christ and His bride.
3) As it will occur when God again takes Israel as His wife.

(This subject was dealt with in a general way in the last chapter of this book, it will be dealt with in relation to Christ and the Church in this chapter [from the Book of Ruth], and it will be dealt with in relation to God and Israel in the next chapter [from the Book of Esther]).

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Understanding the typology of both Ruth and Esther (particularly Ruth, as matters pertain to both the redemption of the inheritance and marriage), is vitally necessary in order to properly understand the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

The fifth parable begins with events foreshadowed by events in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth — Boaz’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance belonging to Elimelech’s family (with Ruth then becoming his wife), typifying Christ’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance (with the Church then becoming His wife).

In the type, these things occurred *ONLY after Ruth had become a member of the family (ch. 1), had gleaned in Boaz’s field from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the barley harvest (ch. 2), and had prepared herself for an appearanceonBoaz’s threshing floor at midnight (ch. 3).*

And so it is in the antitype. *ALL of these things precede the redemptive act seen in chapter four — type or antitype.*
**The Family Relationship (Chapter One)**

The Book ofRuth beginswith a Jewish family (a father [Elimelech], a mother [Naomi], and their two sons [Mahlon and Chilion]) leaving Bethlehem, because of a famine in the land, to sojourn in Moab. The family dwelled in Moab for awhile; then the father died. This left Naomi, the mother, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion (vv. 1-3).

The sons then took wives of the women of Moab. Mahlon married Ruth, Chilion married Orpah, and they dwelled in the land together for about ten years. Naomi’s two sons then died, which left Naomi with only her two daughters-in-law (vv. 4, 5).

After this, Naomi received word that the famine had ended in her own country; and she made the necessary preparations to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem (v. 6).

She departed on the journey toward Bethlehem, with Ruth and Orpah. But, while enroute, Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law to return to the people which they had left rather than accompany her the remainder of the way. Orpah, at this point in the journey, chose to turn back; but Ruth chose to continue the journey (vv. 7ff).

Ruth, in her determination to continue the journey with Naomi, said:

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (vv. 16, 17).

Then Naomi, seeing that Ruth was *determined* to continue on to Bethlehem with her, “left speaking to her.” And the two of them continued the journey together (vv. 18ff).

Thus, the family relationship was established at the very beginning of the book, with the remainder of the book providing numerous details concerning this relationship. And three particulars are presented about this family relationship in the first chapter:

1) Ruth and Orpah, becoming a part of the family, were taken from the Gentiles.
2) Ruth and Orpah were joined to a Jewish family.
3) A division later occurred within this family relationship — Ruth went on with Naomi, Orpah turned back.

All of this, of course, is typical of events occurring within God’s economy during the present dispensation. God is presently removing from *the Gentiles* “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14; *cf.* Rom. 11:25). Israel has been set aside for a dispensation, while the Spirit of God acquires *a bride*for God’s Son. And this Gentile bride, as Ruth, must possess *a Jewish relationship.* There can be *NO* journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread, *apart from an association with the Jews.*

Four thousand years ago God called one man out of the human race to be the channel through whom the remainder of the human race would *be blessed.* God called *Abraham* out of Ur of the Chaldees, gave him *a land*through an unconditional covenant, and promised that *through this one man and his seed* (through Isaac, Jacob, and his lineal descendants, through his twelve sons) all the Gentile nations of the earthwould*be blessed*(Gen.12:1-3;*cf.*Gen.13:14-18;15:18-21;22:17,18).

Beyond this point in Scripture, all spiritual blessing (salvation, or any other blessing) coming to mankind could come *ONLY through Abraham and his descendants, through the lineage of Isaac and Jacob. This is the way God ESTABLISHED matters very early in His revelation to man, this is the way they PRESENTLY exist, and this is the way they will ALWAYS exist, whether in time or in eternity.*

(Actually, God had previously established matters in this respect beginning with Shem [Gen. 9:25-27]; then Abraham, a descendant of Shem, was singled out about five hundred years later as the one through whom that seen beginning with Shem would be fulfilled.)

Salvation for Gentiles today (or for Jews) can be effected *ONLY through Divine power* and *ONLY through that which God has brought to pass through the Jewish people.*Note two verses of Scripture in this respect:

“Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9b). “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22b).

Both *MUST*be true. Salvation *MUST be of the Lord*because unsaved man is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Unsaved man is *completely incapable*of acting in the spiritual realm. He is *spiritually dead*, and Another must act on his behalf *in order to effect life where no life exists.* And this is accomplished through the Spirit of God breathing life into unregenerate man, on the basis of *the finished work of God’s Son, a Jew.*

Thus, *salvation is BOTH*“of the Lord” and “of the Jews.” Individuals passing “from death unto life,” through the work of the Spirit during the present dispensation (*cf.*John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) are, positionally, “in Christ,” *Abraham’s Seed.* And since Christ is *Abraham’s seed,* they too, because of their position “in Christ,” are also *Abraham’s seed*(Gal. 3:16, 29).

Those who, in time past, were “aliens from the commonwealth [citizenship, having todo*with regal activity*]of Israel”havebeen“made nigh [‘brought near’]”; and, through being “Abraham’s seed,” are now “heirs according to the promise [*heavenly,* not earthly].” They, through being *Abraham’s seed,*have the prospect of one day participating *in regal activity in the heavens with the greater Son of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:12, 13).

But, going back to the type, note the difference which Scripture presents between Ruth and Orpah after they had become members of thefamily andhadbegun the journey toBethlehem, theHouse of Bread.

Ruth determined within herself *to complete the journey.* But not so with Orpah. *She turned back.*

And so it *must be* on the one hand and *is* on the other with Christianstoday. All Christiansare in a position tobegin the journey toward the House of Bread, but not all begin or complete the journey. Some, like Ruth, leave the country from which they were called and go on (*ref.*the fourth part of the parable of the Sower in Chapter III of this book); but others either never really begin the journey or, like Orpah, they turn back after beginning the journey (*ref.* the first three parts of the parable of the Sower in Chapter III of this book).

In the typology of Gen. 24:57, 58, Ruth, as Rebekah — in response to the question, “Wilt thou go with this man?” — said, “I will go.” And Ruth went on with Naomi, *toward the House of Bread.* Orpah though didn’t respond in this manner. Instead, *she turned back.*

At the time of the journey, Ruth and Orpah were related to Naomi *through death* (The prior death of their husbands had terminated the marriage relationship itself. And, in the antitype, Christians are also members of the family *through death.*Christians are Abraham’s seed *through death, the death of Another*). But, though Orpah, *after turning back,* remained just as much a member of the family as Ruth, there is *NO mention* of her in the Book of Ruth beyond the point of *her turning back,* just as there is *NO mention* of Lot’s wife in the Genesis account beyond the point of *her looking back*[Gen. 19:26].

Christ’s admonitions and warnings in this respect are clear; note Luke 9:62; 17:32:

“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
“Remember Lot’s wife.”

**Gleaning in Boaz’s Field (Chapter Two)**
Once Naomi and Ruth had arrived in Bethlehem, attention is called to two things:

1) They had returned at the beginning of barley harvest.
2) Naomi had a kinsman (through her deceased husband), Boaz, in whose field Ruth could glean grain.
And this is where Ruth found herself — gleaning in Boaz’s field (1:22-2:3).
Boaz, “a mighty man of wealth,” took note of Ruth gleaning in his field, inquired of her, instructed her to not glean in any other field, and then instructed his workers in the field to purposefully leave handfuls of grain for her to glean. And Ruth gleaned in Boaz’s field after this fashion *from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the harvest* (2:4-23).
All of this is a picture of the Christian in the race of “the faith,” gleaning in the field of the One Whom Boaz typifies.
A “field” is used in Scripture to typify *the world*(Matt. 13:38; *cf.* Gen. 37:15), “gleaning” in the field has to do with *bringing forth fruit*while in the world, and “the length” of the gleaning (from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the harvest) has to do with *a never-ending work, extending throughout the dispensation.* A Christian is to set his sights on the goal out ahead, and he is to be busy throughout the course of the dispensation in his Master’s field. And he is to concern himself with *one thing.* He is to concern himself *with THAT provided for him to glean, NOT with that provided for another to glean.*
Boaz instructed his workers to purposefully leave handfuls of grain behind for Ruth to glean. Thus,*Boaz provided THAT which Ruth was to glean,* giving his workers instructions that it was to be left *specifically for her.* And all she had to do was glean *THAT which the workers, at Boaz’s instructions, had left.*
And so it is with Christians bringing forth fruit today. *The Lord of the harvest has provided for each and every Christian.* Christians are to simply glean *THAT which has been provided, by the Lord’s instructions, for them to glean.* They are to bring forth fruit through simply working with *THAT which has already been provided for them.*
Then *the length of time*in which they are to be busy in the Master’s field, after this fashion, is simply stated. It is “until even” on the one hand, and it is “unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest” on the other (2:17, 23). It is *a never-ceasing work,* and it is *to continue UNTIL the end of the present dispensation.*
And another thing relative to the harvest stands out in the text — something of utmost importance and significance. Ruth, after she had gleaned in the field throughout the day, “beat out that she had gleaned,” leaving “about an ephah of barley” (2:17). That is, she didn’t confine her work to just one part of the task — gathering the grain which had been left for her. Rather, after gathering the grain, she worked with that which she had gleaned, removing the grain from the stalk. She worked with that which she had gleaned until the valuable part alone remained.
And so it is with Christians today. They are not to confine themselves to just one part of the task. They, for example, are not to cease their work following the proclamation of the message of salvation by grace through faith. Rather, once a person has been saved, they are then to continue their work with that which has been taken from the field. They are then to provide instruction concerning why the person has been saved. They are then to proclaim all the various facets of the message surrounding the coming glory of Christ. And they are to provide this instruction until a certain revealed time. Remaining within the framework of the type, they are to reap stalks of grain from the field. Then they are to continue the harvest, working with that which has been gleaned from the field. And they are to continue this work until that which is worthless has been separated from that which is of value. They are to continue this work until individuals have been brought from immaturity to maturity (from *gnosis* to *epignosis*), until they have been grounded in “the faith” (Eph. 4:11-15).
Note how Paul conducted his ministry along these lines (*cf.* Acts 20:20-32; Col. 1:1-29). And note Paul’s command in his second epistle to Timothy, along these same lines:

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (4:5).

The word “evangelist” (Gk., *euaggelistes*) means, *a proclaimer of good news.* The word is not used in Scripture in the narrow sense in which it is often used in Christendom today — one proclaiming only the good news of the grace of God as it pertains to eternal verities. Scripture uses this word in a much broader sense.

Timothy, being told to “do the work of an evangelist,” was simply being told *to proclaim the good news.* What good news was he to proclaim? The context itself has to do with the good news of the coming glory of Christ (*cf.*3:15; 4:1, 7, 8). Thus, contextually, this facet of the good news would be foremost in view.

But there is another facet to the good news — a preceding facet — the good news of the grace of God. And the command to Timothy could not preclude this facet of the good news, though the context deals with the other.

In other words, if Timothy was dealing with the unsaved, he was to proclaim the good news of the grace of God. He couldn’t proclaim anything else to them, for they were still “dead in trespasses and sins.” They were incapable of spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14).

But, once they had “passed from death unto life,” he was no longer to proclaim the good news of the grace of God to them. Such would be meaningless, for they had already heard and responded to this message. He was then to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ, for now they could understand spiritual truth (I Cor. 2:9-13).

Either way though he would be doing the work of *an evangelist.* That is, he would be proclaiming good news, whether relative to salvation by grace or the coming glory of Christ.

And placing this within the framework of the type in Ruth chapter two, the same person proclaiming the good news of the grace of God to the unsaved is then to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ to those responding. And he is to continue the latter until the wheat has been separated from the chaff, else the Lord of the harvest will, Himself, have to make this separation at the judgment seat.

(In the preceding respect, there is often an unBiblical distinction made between an “evangelist” and a “pastor-teacher,” as seen in Eph. 4:11. In actuality, their message is *the same.* It involves both *the gospel of the grace of God* and *the gospel of the glory of Christ.*

The difference in their ministries would lie more in the fact that a pastor-teacher has a flock entrusted to him, which means that the emphasis in his ministry would undoubtedly fall more into the latter category than the former. But the fact remains. Both the evangelist and the pastor-teacher are to proclaim *the whole of the good news,*with circumstances determining where the emphasis is to be placed.)

**Preparation for Meeting Boaz (Chapter Three)**

Chapter three in the Book of Ruth presents two main things. This chapter presents *Ruth preparing herself for a future meeting with Boaz,* and *the necessary details concerning that meeting.* And the whole of the matter — how Ruth was to prepare herself for this future meeting, on Boaz’s threshing floor — was told to her *by Naomi.*

That would be to say, Ruth, a Gentile, learned *everything she knew* about how to prepare herself for the future meeting with Boaz, along with details concerning the actual meeting itself, *from a Jew.*

And if Christians in the antitype today would know anything about present preparation for a future meeting with Christ, on His threshing floor, along with details concerning that meeting, they will have to learn these things from that which God gave *to and through Israel.* They will have to learn these things from *a Jewish book, which relates the story of a Jewish Saviour.*

“He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation [any Gentile]: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord” (Ps. 147:19, 20).

*1) Preparation*

Naomi, speaking to Ruth, set forth three things which she was to do by way of preparation prior to going forth to meet Boaz. Naomi told Ruth:

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor…” (3:3a).

Ruth prepared herself after this threefold fashion, and she then met Boaz on his threshing floor. And this, resultingly, set a sequence of events in motion which are seen brought to a conclusion in the fourth chapter of the book.

*a) Wash Thyself*
“Washing” has to do with *cleansing,* and the overall thought in Ruth 3:3 has to do with the necessity of Ruth presenting herself *clean*in Boaz presence. And, brought over into the antitype, exactly the same thing is seen — the necessity of Christians presenting themselves *clean*in Christ’s presence, in that future day.

Cleansing in this typical sense, as presented in the Book of Ruth, can be seen numerous places throughout Scripture. Old Testament priests, for example, were given a complete bath upon their entrance into the priesthood (a one-time event, never to be repeated [Ex. 29:4; 40:12-15]); and then, subsequent provision was made for repeated washings of the priests’ hands and feet as they became defiled in the process of carrying out their ministry (Ex. 30:19-21).

These latter washings were that which Christ dealt with when washing the disciples’ feet in John 13:8-10. A washing of the complete body had already occurred. Thus, only washings of parts of the body were now necessary.

And that pictured by these latter washings when Christ washed the disciples’ feet is also the same type washing dealt with in Ruth 3:3. Ruth washed herself *as a member of the family,* not to become a member of the family.

Water, as used in these various washings different places in Scripture, can never take away sin. But a washing of the complete body and subsequent washings of parts of the body, after the fashion presented, typify that which can — *Christ’s shed blood.*

In the Old Testament sacrifice, shed blood *covered sin.*The sin itself actually still remained, though God didn’t see the sin. Rather He saw only *the blood which covered the sin.*

But the shed blood of Christ, to which all the Old Testament sacrifices pointed, goes a step farther. The shed blood of Christ *does away with sin.*Rather than cover sin, *Christ’s shed blood completely removes sin, with the sin no longer even existing.*

A Christian, by means of Christ’s blood, has been cleansed completely. Within the typology seen in the Old Testament, his complete body has been washed, never to be repeated (a cleansing which has to do with his eternal salvation, the salvation of his spirit).

But, also within the typology seen in the Old Testament, defilement occurs in the process of the Christian carrying out his ministry in the field, necessitating repeated cleansings of parts of the body, as they become defiled (cleansings which have to do with present and future aspects of salvation, the salvation of the soul). And that’s what the present high priestly ministry of Christ is about.

Christ’s present high priestly ministry is being performed in the heavenly sanctuary,*on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, to provide a present cleansing for the kingdom of priests which He is about to bring forth.* It is being performed *for Christians (members of the family), so that they can be properly prepared for an inevitable future meeting, a meeting with Christ on His threshing floor;* and it is being performed so Christians can appear in His presence, in that future day, in *a clean* manner (*cf.* I John 1:7-2:2).

*b) Anoint Thee*
“Oil” was used in the Old Testament to anoint prophets, priests,
and kings. And there was a connection between the use of oil after this
fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower
him for the office to which he was being consecrated.
The anointing of Saul and David would be two such examples (I
Sam. 10:1, 6; 16:13). The Spirit came upon each following their being
anointed, to empower them for the regal tasks which they were to
perform.
Then the parable of the ten virgins sets forth matters as they would
exist relative to the Holy Spirit and Christians during the present
dispensation. All ten virgins had oil in their vessels, but only five
possessed an extra supply of oil.
That would be to say, all Christians have that spoken of in the
parable through the use of oil, but not all Christians possess an extra
supply of oil. That is, all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, but not
all Christians are filled with the Spirit.
And, as Ruth could not be properly prepared for meeting Boaz
apart from being anointed, neither can a Christian be properly prepared for meeting Christ apart from being filled with the Spirit. This
will become more evident through viewing the third part of Naomi’s
command concerning proper preparation.

*c) Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee*

Ruth was going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and so are Christians in the antitype. And an individual going forth to meet the Bridegroom must not only be properly prepared through that shown by *the washing* and *the anointing* but also through that shown by *the raiment.* And in view of that which lay ahead and that which Scripture elsewhere has to say about this matter, only one thing can be in view in this part of Naomi’s command to Ruth, as it relates to Christians. Only *the wedding garment* can possibly be in view.

This apparel, according to Rev. 19:7, 8 ismade up of “the righteousness [*lit.,*‘righteous acts’] of saints.” This is something which Christians progressively weave for themselves, over time, as they glean in the field and beat out the grain. And to do this work in a proper manner, with the wedding garment being progressively woven, an extra supply of oil is necessary. That is, being filled with the Spirit for the task at hand is *an absolute necessity,* for only through being filled with the Spirit can a work in the spiritual realm be effectively accomplished.

Appearing in Christ’spresence in that future day *without a wedding garment* is the central issue in the parable of the marriage feast (Matt. 22:1-14) and is a central issue in the letter to the Church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21).

Relative to the man appearing *without a wedding garment* and the subject at hand in Matt. 22:1-14 — the wedding festivities — the man was cast into the darkness outside the banqueting hall (v. 13). And relative to an entire Church appearing *naked in Christ’s presence* and the subject at hand in Rev. 3:14-21 — ruling from His throne (v. 21) — Christ said, “I will spue thee out of my mouth” (v. 16).

Clear instructions concerning the necessary preparation have been given, and clear warnings concerning that which will occur if the instructions are ignored have been sounded. And any Christian presently in possession of the Word of God — presently in possession of these instructions and warnings — who ignores this revelation and one day finds himself/herself in Christ’s presence, in an unprepared manner, will be *without excuse.*

*2) On the Threshing Floor*

The threshing floor was the place where the grain was taken to be beaten out and separated from the chaff. This is the place where that *of value* was separated from that which was *worthless.*

John the Baptist connected the threshing floor with Christ’s future judgment of His people (Matt. 3:12), and he could only have drawn this thought from that set forth in the Old Testament types. This is the place where “the chaff” *will be burned*“with unquenchable fire,” which is what Paul had in mind in his first letter to those in Corinth (3:12-15).

Ruth appeared on Boaz’s threshing floor in a particular manner, at a particular time. She appeared *in a prepared manner, at midnight.*
“Midnight” in Scripture is always used in connection with *judgment.* That’s the manner in which the word is first used in Scripture (Ex. 11:4), establishing a first-mention principle, which can never change. And, with the usage of the word set in this manner, any subsequent place in Scripture where the word is used, *judgment* has to always be in view (*e.g.,* Job 34:20; Ps. 119:62; Matt. 25:6).

(“Midnight” is a translation of two words in both the Hebrew and Greek texts [also, at times, a compound word in the Greek text] — *lit.,* “the middle of the night,” either Hebrew or Greek.)

Thus, both “the time” and “the place” of Ruth’s appearance in Boaz’s presence speak of *judgment.* But Ruth herself, passing through that connected with judgment, was *blessed* (3:10); and the reason is obvious. Ruth was *properly prepared* for this appearance. Ruth was *properly prepared* for that which lay ahead.

Not only had Ruth washed herself, anointed herself, and put on raiment, but she had also threshed that which she had gleaned from the field prior to her appearance in Boaz’s presence. Had she brought the grain which she had gleaned from Boaz’s field with her to the threshing floor, there would have been nothing more for Boaz to do with it, for it had already been threshed. That which was of no value had already been removed.

In the light of I Cor. 11:31, 32, Ruth had brought matters to pass in such a manner that events on the threshing floor could have had no affect on that which she had gleaned from the field. Or, in the light of I Cor. 3:11-15, there could have been no “wood, hay, stubble” threshed from her gleanings. This had already been removed.

Ruth was prepared *in EVERY way possible*for the meeting with Boaz, on histhreshing floor. Thus, *ONLY blessings*couldpossibly have ensued.
**Redemption of the Inheritance (Chapter Four)**

The redemption seen in Ruth chapter four, chronologically, occurred *AFTER all the events depicted in chapters one through three had been completed.* This redemption had to do with a work which occurred *FOLLOWING events on the threshing floor, and this work had to do with two things:*

1) Boaz’s redemption of a forfeited inheritance belonging to Elimelech’s family, belonging more particularly to Naomi following Elimelech’s death (Ruth 4:3, 5).

2) Ruth, through Boaz’s redemptive work, becoming his wife (Ruth 4:5, 9, 10).

And once the inheritance had been redeemed, *with Ruth becoming Boaz’s wife, the inheritance then belonged to them.*
This, of course, in the antitype, has to do with *a redemptive work to be performed by Christ, on behalf of Christians, FOLLOWING events at the judgment seat.*
And once the forfeited inheritance has been redeemed, *the one typified by Ruth will become the wife of the One typified by Boaz, with the inheritance then belonging to them.*

(For additional information on Christ’s dealings with the Church, as presented in this chapter, refer to the author’s book, *Ruth*.
*The redemption of the inheritance*and*the bride, through this redemption, becoming Christ’s wife*form the central subject of the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, dealt with in Chapters X, XI in this book.
For additional information on this subject, see the author’s book, *The Time of the End*, Chapters VIII, IX.)

9

God and Israel

***Seen in the Typology of Ahasuerus and Esther***

“If it please the king, let there be a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she…

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti…

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him…

Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the House of Haman, and him have they hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews…

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.
And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereupon the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?
For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed” (Esther 1:19; 2:17; 3:1; 8:7; 10:1-3).

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The Books of Ruth and Esther are companion books in Scripture, presenting two overall chronologies of interrelated events having to do with the marriage relationship as it pertains to regality.

The book of Ruth presents a history of *Christ and the Church,*culminating with the Son possessing *a wife to rule as consort queen with Him*.
The Book of Esther presents a history of *God and Israel,*culminating with the Father possessing *a restored wife to rule as consort queen with Him.*
Both books begin *in past time*, carry the reader through events occurring *during present time*, and culminate at the same point *in future time.*
These are the only books in Scripture named for women, and no one knows who wrote either book. They both stand together in this respect.
But they also both stand together in a far greater and more significant respect. These two books, together, relate *the complete story of both the Father and the Son as it pertains to a regal principle within the marriage relationship, set forth very early in Scripture:*

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and *let them have dominion…*” (Gen. 1:26a).

Man, created in the image and likeness of God, was created to rule the earth. But man *could NOT rule alone.* The woman, formed from a part of the man, was to rule as consort queen with him. She was *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh.* And the man *could NOT rule as a complete being apart from the woman*(Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:23, 24).

This will explain Adam’s act after Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit. *Adam could NOT have eaten of the tree of life following Eve’s sin* (the tree which would have provided the wisdom and knowledge to rule and to reign), *for he could NOT have ascended the throne as a complete being.*

Eve had to be brought back into the position which she had occupied prior to the fall in order for Adam to rule and to reign, *as a complete being.*

Thus, Adam had *NO* choice other than to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *with a view to redemption.* And redemption would be *with a view to BOTH the man and the woman, TOGETHER, one day being in a position to eat of the tree of life and ascend the throne, as God intended when He created man and formed the woman from a part of the man.*

The sequence of events set forth through Adam’s act forms a type of the second Man, the last Adam, finding His bride — a part of His very being — in a fallen state and being made sin, *with a view to redemption* (II Cor. 5:21; Eph. 5:30-32; *cf.* vv. 21-29). And redemption in the antitype is the same as in the type. It is *with a view to Christ and His bride (His wife) one day ascending the throne TOGETHER, as God intended for man in the beginning, at the time of man’s creation.*

Thus, Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, *CANNOT reign apart from a redeemed bride* (to be His wife), who is presently being formed from a part of His body, His very being. To do so would violate an established Biblical principle. *The Son, during the coming Messianic Era, MUST have a wife if He is to ascend the throne and rule the earth.*

And, understanding this, the present ministry of the Spirit of God in the World — seeking a bride for God’s Son (Gen. 24) — can easily be understood as well. *God has set aside an entire dispensation, lasting 2,000 years; and, at the beginning of this dispensation, God sent His Spirit into the world to acquire a bride for His Son*—*a work nearing completion today.*

But there is another facet to this principle set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis, and this is what the Book of Esther is about. Abraham had a natural seed, through Isaac and Jacob, which was not only established in a theocracy on earth during Old Testament days but will be reestablished in a theocracy on earth during the Messianic Era.

And two things should be noted about Abraham’s natural seed, the nation of Israel, during the Messianic Era:

1) This nation *will NOT form part of Christ’s wife.*
2) In order to rule, this nation *will have to occupy the SAME type relationship with Another (with God) as the Church will occupy with Christ — a Husband-wife relationship.*

The latter is the reason Israel is seen in the Old Testament as *the wife of Jehovah.* This is a position which the nation *had to hold* in order to reign in the Old Testament theocracy, and this is a position which the nation *will have to hold* in order to reign when the theocracy is restored.

There *had to be* such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during Old Testament days, and there *will have to be* such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during the Messianic Era.

A relationship of this nature *had to exist* in the past and *will have to exist* in the future *because of the God-established relationship between the man and the woman as it pertains to regality in Gen. 1:26. Man simply CANNOT fulfill the reason for his creation apart from this relationship.*

During the coming Messianic Era, the theocracy will have two parts — *heavenly and earthly.* The wife of the Son, acquired during the present dispensation, will rule from *the heavenly part*; and the wife of Jehovah, restored from the past dispensation, will rule from *the earthly part*.

And, as the Book of Ruth dealt with the former ( *the heavenly*), the Book of Esther deals with the latter (*the earthly*).
The entire present dispensation, having to do with the Spirit’s search for a bride for God’s Son, is not dealt with at all in the Book of Esther. It is passed over entirely, for this book has to do with *God and Israel.*
And dealing with God and Israel after this fashion, the Book of Esther covers events surrounding both Israel’s past rejection and the nation’s future acceptance.
The emphasis in the book though is on the latter, not the former. Most of the book deals with *events leading into and having to do with Israel’s future acceptance, NOT with events surrounding Israel’s past rejection.*

**Vashti — Rejected**

Israel’s past rejection is seen in the experiences of Vashti, the queen. This is the manner in which the Book of Esther begins, following a brief introduction of the king and his kingdom (1:1-9).

Vashti *refused* to heed King Ahasuerus’ command, and, because of the far-reaching ramifications of her refusal, the king became enraged. Through her actions, Vashti had not only committed a transgression against the king but also against all the people of the provinces under his command as well. And, resultingly, the king *rejected* Vashti as queen, with a view to “her royal estate” being given to another (1:10-19).

This part of the Book of Esther covers a history of Israel extending from the days of Moses to that future time when God once again turns to Israel and begins to deal with the nation. This part of the book covers 3,500 years of human history.

*1) From Moses to John*

Israel’s history, in one respect, can be traced back to God’s statement to Satan at the time of man’s fall (Gen. 3:15). *The Seed of the woman* was a reference to “Christ,” Whom Israel, 4,000 years later, brought forth.

The nation’s history, in another respect, can be traced back to Noah’s words concerning Shem (Gen. 9:26). Of Noah’s three sons — from whom the entire human race descended — *Shem ALONE was revealed to have a God. And so it is with the descendants of Shem through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (Eph. 2:12, 13).

Then, in the preceding respect, the nation’s history can be traced back to God’s command and promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham was the one called out of Ur to be the channel through which the nation of Israel and the Messiah would come. And it was through Israel, the nation bringing forth the Messiah, that God promised *to bless all the nations of the earth* (Gen. 12:3; John 8:37; Gal. 3:16).

And the nation’s history, in still another respect, can be traced back to God’s actions as they pertained to Jacob (Isa. 43:1-10). It was in the person of Jacob that God performed a special creative act, setting his lineal descendants forth as *separate and distinct* from all the surrounding nations.

But the beginning of the nation *in relation to the theocracy* was not seen until Moses’ day (Ex. 12:2). It was only during Moses’ day that a nation existed, with which God could deal on a national basis, in relation to the theocracy, as it pertained to sonship and the rights of primogeniture (*cf.* Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6; 40:34-38).

A nation was born the night of the Passover in the land of Egypt. Death had occurred through sacrificial lambs, blood had been applied (showing a substitutionary death), and the Lord had passed over those households where the blood had been applied.

The Passover, in this respect, marked “the beginning of months” for the nation of Israel (Ex. 12:2ff).
Burial then occurred in the Red Sea, and the nation subsequently stood on the eastern banks of the sea in resurrection power.
And Israel under Moses, having left Egypt (a type of *the world* in Scripture), *was to ultimately dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy.
God Himself was to rule in the midst of His people, and this rule was to extend throughout the entire earth, with all the nations of the earth being blessed because of and through Israel.*
The extent to which Israel was to rule and be a blessing (wherein the nation refused to heed the King’s command) is that which is in view in the extent to which Vashti’s actions reached (wherein she refused to heed the king’s command).
Vashti’s refusal in the type had far-reaching ramifications which extended *not only to the king but to everyone in the kingdom as well*(Esther 1:1, 11, 12, 16).
And Israel’s refusal in the antitype had *the SAME far-reaching ramifications.* Such a refusal extended *not only to the King but to everyone in the kingdom as well* (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 43:1-10).
The nations of the earth were to be blessed through Israel, as Israel occupied her God-ordained place in the theocracy (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5, 6). *And ANY refusal by Israel to occupy this place would have negative repercussions* (Lev. 26:14ff; Deut. 28:15ff; Hosea 1:9).
Through such a refusal, there would be a failure to bring matters to pass concerning the King’s decreed manner in which the nations were to be blessed, *and this would result in these blessings being withheld.*
Thus, such a transgression on Israel’s part *would be directed not only toward God Himself but toward the Gentile nations of the earth as well*.
*And a transgression of this nature on Israel’s part is EXACTLY what is seen in Old Testament history.*
The theocracy reached its heights during the days of David and Solomon (some four centuries following Moses and Joshua). But even during this period, conditions within the theocracy were still far removed from that which God had intended when He called the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses.
Then, following Solomon’s death and the division of the kingdom, *things began to go even further awry. Matters progressively deteriorated, and the voice of the prophets went unheeded* (*cf.* Matt. 23:34-37; Acts 7:51, 52).
And this *ultimately* resulted in God allowing Gentile nations to come in and carry His people captive into the very nations which those being taken captive had previously been called forth to bless.
God allowed the Assyrians to come down in 722 B.C. and carry away the northern ten tribes. Then He allowed the Babylonians to come over in 605 B.C. and carry away the southern two tribes. And once the entire nation found itself under Gentile dominion, that period in Scripture known as “the times of the Gentiles” began.
“The times of the Gentiles” has to do with that period during Man’s Day when the Gentile nations exercise regal power and authority in the world. *This time began when the theocracy was taken from Israel, and it will end when the theocracy has been restored to Israel.*
The Times of the Gentiles will come to a close *ONLY at that future time when God concludes His dealings with Israel, at the end of the coming Tribulation, at the end of Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week. It will be at that time, NOT before, that the theocracy will be restored to Israel*.

*2) From John Until…*

But even after “the times of the Gentiles” began, God did not cast Israel aside. His promise to Solomon four hundred years earlier remained just as true then as it had always existed:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chron. 7:14).

Two climactic points, following the captivity, can be seen in Israel’s history in this respect — one past, and the other future. The former occurred over six hundred years after the Times of the Gentiles began, and the latter will occur at the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

Almost two thousand years ago (over six hundred years after the Times of the Gentiles began), when God sent His Son the first time, Israel was given opportunity to repent; and this was done in association with events and circumstances of a nature never before seen in the nation. Messiah Himself was present, the kingdom of the heavens was offered to Israel (which, if the nation had accepted, would have necessitated the restoration of the earthly segment of the theocracy as well), and there was *a manifestation of signs (associated with the proffered kingdom) unlike anything previously seen in Israel.*

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah, calling for Israel’s repentance, declaring that *the kingdom of the heavens* was “at hand” (Matt. 3:1ff). Then Israel’s Messiah Himself appeared, calling for the nation’s repentance, extending the same offer of the kingdom to the Jewish people (Matt. 4:17ff).

But though numerous Jews heeded the message, the nation at large continued in the same nonrepentant way which had marked Israel’s actions so much during the days of the Old Testament theocracy (*cf.* Matt. 12:14, 22-24; 23:13; John 9:14, 33, 34; 12:9-11; 19:5-14).

Others were sent to the nation at this time — the Twelve, then the Seventy (Matt. 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff). But a refusal on Israel’s part continued. And Israel climaxed this refusal by crucifying the very One Whom John the Baptist had initially gone before and proclaimed to the nation — the One Who had taken up the message following John’s imprisonment, the One Who had commissioned and sent the Twelve and the Seventy, Messiah Himself.

Then following the death, burial, and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah, a re-offer of the kingdom was made by the apostles and others (detailed in the Book of Acts). But Israel still refused, continuing to (detailed in the Book of Acts). But Israel still refused, continuing to 21; 5:17-40; 7:51-60; 8:1ff; *cf.*Matt. 23:31-36).

And the nation, following this re-offer of the kingdom, was then set aside while God called out from among the Gentiles “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). Israel was set aside for a dispensation, allowing the Holy Spirit — sent at this time in one respect, already in the world in another — *to procure a bride for God’s Son from among the Gentiles.*

All the preceding actions surrounding Israel can be seen in the experiences of Vashti in the Book of Esther. Vashti, in her experiences, *forms the type*; and Israel, in the nation’s experiences, *forms the antitype.*

But Vashti’s experiences form only part of the story, that of *disobedience and rejection.* There is another part to the story, a part which has to do with *obedience and acceptance.* And this part is seen in the experiences of Esther.

**Esther — Accepted**

At the end of the present dispensation when God turns once again to Israel, His actions will be with a view *to Israel’s repentance,* followed by *His acceptance and the subsequent restoration of the nation.* The Jewish people will be brought to the place of *repentance;* and there will then be *acceptance* on God’s part, with *restoration* following.

Chapter one in the Book of Esther has to do with *Israel’s rejection,* and chapter two has to do with *Israel’s acceptance.* Vashti, typifying Israel past and present, was *rejected* (1:19); and Esther, typifying Israel yet future, was *accepted* (2:17).

Then the remainder of the book presents a number of details surrounding Israel immediately preceding and at the time of the nation’s acceptance, with the end of the matter being seen in the experiences of both Esther and Mordecai.

In the chronology of Esther, *God views Israel as already restored to her rightful place (cf. 2:17; 5:2, 12; 7:1, 5, 7, 8) prior to the occurrence of certain events which actually precede this restoration (3:1-9:14).*

Haman and his ten sons typify Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy. And Israel’s repentance in the antitype, followed by God’s acceptance and restoration of the nation, will not actually occur until very near the end of the Tribulation, extending into events which will be brought to pass following Christ’s return immediately following the Tribulation.

That which will bring about Israel’s repentance is centered in the actions of those typified by Haman and his ten sons. Then Israel being accepted and exalted is seen in the experiences of both Esther and Mordecai after Haman and his ten sons had been removed from the scene.

The fact that Esther is seen married to the king and crowned in the book prior to and during the events surrounding Haman and his ten sons — which seemingly would be out of line with a proper chronology in the antitype — is perfectly aligned with the way God often presents things in His revelation to man. God often presents matters in His revelation as having already occurred before they have actually been brought to pass (*e.g.,*the crucifixion of His Son “from the foundation of the world,” four thousand years before it occurred in human history [Rev. 13:8]; or His viewing Satan’s “fall from heaven” two thousand years before it actually does occur [Luke 10:18]).

And also, God often provides a complete chronology of events in His revelation prior to providing details for things within the chronology (*e.g.,* in Revelation chapter twelve, the first six verses provide a complete chronology of events, with the remainder of the chapter [vv. 7-17] simply providing a commentary for these events).

(Actually, the whole of Scripture is structured in the preceding fashion.
Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides a complete chronology of events covering 7,000 years of time. Then, the remainder of Scripture is simply a commentary on these opening verses, providing all the numerous and necessary details.)

The account in Esther combines both of the two preceding ways God often presents things in His Word. First, the matter of Esther being made queen is seen as having occurred; and then a complete chronology of events is given, providing a commentary surrounding Esther being made queen.

God views the complete matter of Israel’s past and present rejection in chapter one, along with the complete matter of the nation’s future acceptance in chapter two. Then, the remainder of the book (chs. 3ff) forms not only a commentary on chapter two — providing necessary details — but, throughout this commentary, God continues to view Israel as occupying the exalted position in which the nation is seen in chapter two (*e.g.,* 5:2, 12; 7:1, 5, 7, 8).

And, with these things in mind, note the commentary which God has provided — eight chapters (chs. 3-10), which all reflect back on the fact that Esther had been made queen/that Israel will be made queen (2:17).

*And this fact is continuously kept in view throughout the commentary.*

(“Time” is *relative,* not a constant. And God can easily move through time, going back in time or forward in time, bringing events occurring anywhere in time into the present. Note God’s actions in this respect as seen in Eccl. 3:15:

“That which hath been is now [the past is present]; and that which is to be hath already been [the future, seen as past, which is present]; and God requireth that which is past [‘God seeks that which has been pursued’].”)

**Haman — Defeated**

Chapters three through ten in the Book of Esther, forming a commentary on the second chapter, begin by introducing Haman, not seen in the book prior to this time. And, from the point he is introduced, Haman and his family occupy a place at the forefront of events seen throughout the remainder of the book, save the final chapter.

Revelation concerning Haman begins with the king promoting and placing him in a prominent position of power and authority in his kingdom. The king “advanced Haman and set his seat above all the princes that were with him” (3:1).

And, because of Haman’s exalted position, all the king’s servants were commanded to accord him honor (such honor, reverence, was normally shown in that day through falling to the knees and touching the ground with the forehead).

But one individual *refused*. Mordecai, the Jew, *refused to accord Haman such honor.* Mordecai “bowed not, nor did him reverence.”
And this infuriated Haman to the extent that he sought “to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus” (3:2-6). And Haman, seeking to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom, directed his efforts particularly against Mordecai, who had refused to accord him honor.
But matters, through God’s sovereign control of all things, were brought to pass in such a way that *Haman was the one who found himself on the road to ruin and destruction, rather than Mordecai or the rest of the Jewish people* (3:7ff).
And, once Haman found himself on this road, the matter was exactly as stated by both his wise men and his wife, Zeresh:

“If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him” (6:13b).

Once Haman had turned against the Jewish people he found himself forced into situations and circumstances completely beyond his control, situations and circumstances which brought about events completely contrary to that which he had sought to effect. He found himself not only being forced to exalt Mordecai, whom he had sought to put down, but he also, in the end, found himself impaled on the very gallows which he had built for Mordecai (6:1-7:10).

Then, if that wasn’t enough, his ten sons were subsequently slain and impaled on the same gallows (9:10-14). And all of this brought an end to “the house of Haman,” allowing the Jewish people to occupy their rightful, prominent place in the kingdom.

This sequence of events, in type, foreshadows that which will one day occur in the kingdom of Antichrist, and beyond, seen beginning with the breaking of the first seal of the seven-sealed scroll in Revela- tion chapter six (vv. 1, 2). The King Himself will promote Antichrist and place him in the position of power which he is destined to occupy, as Ahasuerus did with Haman. It is God alone Who rules in “the kingdom of men” through His sovereign control of matters. He is the One Who establishes and removes rulers, giving the kingdom “to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:17-26; 5:18-28).

And, in his exalted position of power, “above all the princes,” Antichrist will command the same honor accorded Haman (Rev. 13:2-8). He will have previously made a covenant with ”*many,” those forming the Jewish nation, not with the Jews elsewhere in the world* (Dan. 9:27a). And, in the light of the type in Esther, many Jews, possibly both within and without the nation, may very well reject this man making the covenant, refusing to accord him honor.

Then, in line with both the type and corresponding antitype, Antichrist, in his wrath, after three and one-half years, will turn against the Jewish people “throughout the whole kingdom [worldwide]” and seek their complete destruction, exactly as seen in Haman’s actions (*cf.* Dan. 9:27b; Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff; II Thess. 2:3ff).

But once Antichrist has turned against the Jewish people, *he will have placed himself on the same road of no return previously traveled by Haman.* It will be a downward path, leading to the destruction of not only himself but also his ten-kingdom confederacy (wherein Gentile world power will be centered in that day), seen in the destruction of Haman and his ten sons in the type (*cf.* Dan. 2:33-35, 40-45; 7:7-12, 23-28; Rev. 19:11ff).

Once Antichrist turns against the Jewish people, a period of progressively intensifying trouble will ensue. This period will begin with the breaking of the second seal of the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter six (vv. 3, 4) and will continue until the last of the judgments wrought through the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass — the judgments depicted through the breaking of the seventh seal, the sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven vials (Rev. 8:1ff; 16:1ff).

And conditions in Antichrist’s kingdom will progressively deteriorate throughout this period until the point is reached where, except for the Lord’s intervention, mankind would literally destroy itself:

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved…” (Matt. 24:22a).

This is what lies in store, in the immediate future, for the enlightened world system in which man finds himself today. This is how Man’s Day will end after 6,000 years of human history and so-called advancement.

**Mordecai — Exalted**

But, just as the Book of Esther doesn’t end with the destruction of Haman and his ten sons, neither does Scripture end with the destruction of Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy. Scripture brings matters to a conclusion in this respect the same way in which the Book of Esther foreshadows these same events and brings them to a conclusion in the type — *the Jewish people exalted in a kingdom, following the destruction of their enemies* (*cf.*Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 2:1-4; Joel 3:12-21).

Though Antichrist will be seeking the destruction of the Jewish people, God, through His sovereign control of all things, will use Antichrist’s efforts to bring about the very thing which He Himself desires. God will use this man, who will be responsible for the without-parallel-in-history judgments which will befall those on the earth during this coming time of trouble, to bring His people to *the place of repentance* (Rev. 17:16, 17).

The matter will be exactly as seen in another type — the Israelites in Egypt during Moses’ day. They, because of the severity of the bondage under an Assyrian ruler, were brought to a place where they were left with no choice other than to call upon the God of their fathers. God used the vain efforts of this Assyrian ruler to bring His people to the end of themselves (Ex. 9:15, 16).

God heard His people’s cry, He remembered His “covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob,” and He then sent Moses back to deliver them (Ex. 2:23-3:10).

And exactly the same thing will occur yet future. The Jewish people, because of the severity of the trouble which will ensue under another Assyrian ruler, will be brought to the place where they will have no choice but to call upon the God of their fathers. God will use the vain efforts of this Assyrian ruler to bring His people to the same end as seen during Moses’ day.

And God, as in Moses’ day, will hear His people’s cry; and He will remember His “covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob,” and He will then send Jesus back to deliver them (*cf.* Deut. 30:1-3; Ezek. 36:16-28; Matt. 24:29-31).

When matters were brought to a close in the Book of Esther, the king gave *Esther* “the house of Haman” (8:1, 7), which she placed under Mordecai’s control (v. 2); and also, when matters were brought to a close in this book, the king advanced *Mordecai* in the kingdom, with Mordecai then holding a position of power next unto the king himself (10:2, 3).

Esther and Mordecai, together, present *the complete picture ofrestored Israel in that future day.* Not only will God give Israel the worldwide kingdom of Antichrist but the nation will be elevated into a position of power on earth next unto God Himself.

Deliverance for Israel occurred during Moses’ day, with *a kingdom in view;* deliverance for Israel occurred during Esther and Mordecai’s day, with *a kingdom in view;* and deliverance for Israel will occur yet future, at the end of Man’s Day, during the Lord’s Day, with *a kingdom in view.*

God, in His sovereign control of all things, will bring *ALL events* to pass, exactly as foretold by the prophets. *NOTHING will fail of fulfillment.*

*And Israel, in the end, will occupy her God-ordained place relative to both God and the nations of the earth, as the restored wife of Jehovah, within a theocracy.*

(For additional information on God’s dealings with Israel, as presented in this chapter, refer to the author’s book, *Esther*.)

10

Parable of the Treasure

***Redemption of the Inheritance***

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (Matt. 13:44).

The last three parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, unlike the first four, were given only after Christ *had reentered the house.* The first four were given *outside the house, by the seaside;* and the last three were given *back inside the house* (vv. 1-3, 36).

Beginning with the fifth parable, an entirely different situation existed in the subject matter Christ was covering in these parables. *Israel is brought back into the picture. Thus, Christ had to reenter the house* prior to giving these last three parables.

The first four parables cover the entirety of *the present dispensation, as matters relate to the proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom among Christians.* The dispensation, insofar as the proclamation of this message is concerned, will end, according to these parables, with Christendom in *a completely leavened state* (v. 33).

Because of the working of the leaven during the course of the dispensation, producing a continuing deterioration in Christendom throughout the dispensation (as also seen in Rev. 2, 3), conditions at the end of the dispensation will be as depicted by the Church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21).

*In relation to the proclamation of and adherence to the Word of the Kingdom at the end of the dispensation,* the Church as it will exist at this time, because of the previous working of the leaven throughout the dispensation, is described in Rev. 3:17 as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

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This is simply a description of the same conditions which Christ had called attention to several decades earlier during His earthly ministry: “…when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?” (Luke 18:8b).

And the manner in which this question is worded in the Greek text designates *a negative response.*The Son of Man *will NOT*find “the faith” (an expression peculiarly related to *the Word of the Kingdom*) being taught throughout the Churches of the land at the time of His return.

*The Word of the Kingdom, taught universally throughout the first cen - tury Church at the beginning of the dispensation, will be COMPLETELY absent in teachings throughout the Church at the end of the dispensation.*

*Instead, in some quarters (possibly “many”), that more closely aligned with the “doctrines of demons” will be taught* (I Tim. 4:1-3; *ref.,*Chapter VII in this book).

The working of the leaven throughout the dispensation (fourth parable) will have gradually wrought this change, bringing this change to a terminal point, *leaving Christendom COMPLETELY leavened in relation to the Word of the Kingdom at the end of the dispensation.*

In this respect, the first four parables carry an individual through the whole of the present dispensation. And, moving on to parables five through seven, that being dealt with has to do with *events BEYOND the present dispensation.*

These last three parables have to do with events occurring *AFTER*the Church has been removed from the earth (the rapture) and *AFTER*God has resumed his national dealings with Israel.

Thus, these parables could not have been given by the seaside, as the previous four. At this point in time, relative to events depicted by these parables, God will have completed his work of removing “a people for his name” *from among the Gentiles* (a work symbolized by that which followed His previous *departure from*“the house” and *going down by*“the seaside” [depicted in the first four parables]). And these last three parables *had to be given back inside the house,* for God, at this time, will have finished His dealing with the Church and will have resumed His national dealings with Israel (Acts 15:14-17).

But, though that dealt with in these parables is intimately associated with Israel on the earth and cannot be brought to pass apart from God’s resumption of His national dealings with His covenant people, these parables, as well, have an inseparable connection with *the Church, which will be in the heavens at this time.*

In the preceding respect, these last three parables have to do with *a continued sequence of events pertaining to the Word of the Kingdom.* Though Israel is now brought into view, these last three parables simply continue a sequence of events from the preceding four parables.

All seven of these parables have to do with that taken from Israel — *the kingdom of the heavens* (Matt. 21:43). And, since the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of that which had been taken from Israel, the closing three parables (as the first four), of necessity, *CANNOT be separated from God’s dealings with the Church* (though, as previously seen, the Church, during the time covered by events in these parables, will no longer be on earth).

(The preceding will become clear as the matter is further developed in this chapter.)
**The Treasure, The Field**

The first parable which Christ gave after He had reentered the house had to do with *a treasure* which a Man found and hid in a field. And following this, the Man went out, sold all that He had, and bought *the field* where He had hidden the treasure.

This parable reaches back into past events in order to establish a framework andfoundational basisfor dealing with future events— the central issue of the parable, *the purchase of the field* where the treasure was hidden. *The things leading into and allowing for the purchase of the field* have to do with past events, occurring at Christ’s first coming.

But, *the purchase of the field itself* has to do with events yet future, events which will occur during the coming Tribulation and immediately following Christ’s return at the end of the Tribulation.

The purchase of the field occurs when Israel is brought back into the picture, and *this purchase forms the central thrust in the parable.*All of the things stated in the first part of this fifth parable, along with the preceding four parables, form background material so *one can properly understand and place this purchase within its correct Biblical framework.*

In theprogressionof that revealedin the seven connectedparables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the “field” is specifically stated to be the *world* (v. 38); and, through comparing Scripture elsewhere, the “treasure” can only be identified as *Israel* (Ex. 19:5, 6; Ps. 135:4).

When Christ came the first time, He came *ONLY* to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” offering to the people comprising this nation *the kingdom of the heavens*(Matt. 4:17-25; 10:5, 6; 15:24). However, *Israel spurned the offer, and the kingdom of the heavens was taken from the nation.*

Then Israel was set aside, with a view to an entirely new entity (*the one new man* “in Christ”) being called into existence, to be the recipient of that which had previously been offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

The Man finding the treasure, hiding the treasure, and selling all thatHe had can only be a reference to three events occurring in the past:

*1) Christ coming to and ministering to Israel — finding the treasure.
2) Israel being set aside — hiding the treasure.
3) Christ’s finished work at Calvary — the Man selling all that He had.*

But note that Christ, following His finished work at Calvary, *DIDN’T* purchase *the treasure* (Israel). *RATHER*, He is seen purchasing *the field* (the world) where the treasure was hidden.

And this purchase *CANNOT* be a reference to the purchase of salvation for all those in the world through Christ’s finished work at Calvary, as commonly taught. Christ selling all that He had is *NOT* synonymous with His purchase of the field. Such a teaching would make the parable deal centrally with salvation by grace through faith, *something UNSEEN in any of these parables.*

These parables, rather than dealing with salvation by grace through faith, are about *the Word of the Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Heavens*— something stated in each of the seven parables, leaving *NO room* for anyone to ever misunderstand the subject matter of these parables.

And an erroneous view of Christ’s purchase of the field — making this purchase synonymous with His finished work at Calvary — not only completely removes the parable from its contextual setting but also from the clearly stated subject of the parable.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, that involvedin the purchase of the field in this parable becomes clear. This present earth will form *the inheritance* to be possessed by Christ and His wife during the coming age (*cf.* Ps. 2:6-9; Rom. 8:17-23; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21). And this is what *MUST be purchased, redeemed* prior to a new order of Sons being brought forth to rule from the heavens over the earth (*cf.*Rom. 8:18-21; Heb. 2:5, 10).

The purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure has to do with *a redeemed inheritance — the redemption of the earth.* This is a future work of Christ, made possible because of His past, completed work at Calvary. Calling attention to Israel (the treasure), the world (the field), and Christ’s finished work at Calvary (the man giving all that he had) was necessary prior to any mention of the redemption of the inheritance (the field, the world).

*ALL of these things* set the stage for and lead into Christ’s statement concerning His future redemptive work in this respect.
This will all become clear through viewing a number of things from three different books, which will comprise the material in the remainder of this chapter.

**Three Books**

The Book of Revelation and the Book of Daniel are often looked upon as companion books in Scripture, with one book shedding light upon and helping to explain the other. And this association between these two books is correct. Daniel and Revelation form companion books, with Scripture from one helping to explain Scripture from the other. One book cannot be properly understood apart from the other.

However, *Daniel is NOT the only book in the Old Testament carrying this type relationship to the Book of Revelation.* Rather, *Daniel is ONE of many Old Testament books carrying a relationship to the Book of Revelation of this nature.*

Exodus, for example, could be looked upon as *The Apocalypse of the Old Testament.* The Book of Exodus, throughout — in a type-antitype framework — covers exactly the same period of time covered in the first twenty chapters of the Book of Revelation. Both books cover that period of time beginning with the present dispensation and ending with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

And since both deal with *the SAME thing*, though from different perspectives, *one will shed light upon and help explain the other.*
But, for purposes of this chapter, discussion along these lines will be limited to two other books in the Old Testament which also carry this same type relationship to the Book of Revelation. And those are the Books of Ruth and Esther.
The Book of Ruth deals with *the Church and a redeemed inheritance in exactly the same manner seen in the Book of Revelation.*
And the Book of Esther deals *centrally with Israel in the Tribulation and beyond, in the same manner as also seen in the Book of Revelation.
ONLY* through viewing that seen in the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation *TOGETHER* ca*n the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure in Matt. 13:44 be properly understood.* And not only is the preceding the case for a proper understanding of the fifth parable, *but also for that seen in the sixth parable as well — the purchase of the pearl.*
That seen in the Book of Ruth and that seen in the Book of Esther *are both seen TOGETHER in the Book of Revelation.* Each of these books *MUST* be studied in the light of the other two. *ONLY* through viewing the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation in this respect *can the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen be properly understood.*
That would be to say, events covered by the things in view in the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen are seen in different parts of the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation.
In relation to that which is dealt with in these two parables:
The Book of Ruth *deals with a wealthy Jew who redeems an inheritance and, through this redemptive process, takes a Gentile as his wife.*
The Book of Esther *deals with the latter days of Gentile world power and the restoration of Israel following the overthrow of Gentile world power, which will be headed up under Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy in the end time.*
And the Book of Revelation *puts these different things from both Ruth and Esther together, providing additional details.*
The Spirit of God used two books in the Old Testament (Ruth and Esther) to show both sides of the matter.
Then, in the New Testament, the Spirit of God placed that which is in both Ruth and Esther together in one book — the Book of Revelation. And possibly the best way to understand this is to go to the Book of Revelation, present that which is in this book, and then refer back to the Books of Ruth and Esther, allowing these two books to form commentary and tie matters together.

*1) Revelation Chapters One through Four*
The first four chapters of the Book of Revelation deal with the
Church — throughout the present dispensation (chs. 2, 3), at the judgment seat following the dispensation (chs. 1b-3), and in relation to
regality immediately following decisions and determinations rendered
at the judgment seat but preceding the Tribulation (ch. 4). In the first part of chapter one, following introductory remarks
concerning Christ (vv. 1-8), the Church is seen at a time yet future.
The Church is seen at the end of the dispensation, at the time of the
rapture, removed from Man’s Day on earth and placed in the Lord’s
Day in heaven (v. 10).
Then the remainder of chapter one presents the Church in Christ’s
presence, in heaven. Christ is seen as *Judge* (vv. 13-16), and *the complete Church (all Christians)* — all seven Churches from chapters two
and three, with the number “seven” showing *completeness* — is seen
appearing in Christ’s presence to be judged (vv. 12, 13, 20). Then chapters two and three continue that revealed in chapter
one, depicting the actual judgment itself.
Note that each short epistle in these two chapters is structured
exactly the same way — *works,* with a view *to overcoming or being
overcome.*And each of the overcomer’s promises is *Messianic* within
its scope of fulfillment.
And that seen in these opening three chapters in the Book of
Revelation relative to the removal of Christians into the heavens to
appear before Christ at His judgment seat at the end of the dispensation is *EXACTLY* what Scripture elsewhere reveals about the matter. Following the removal of Christians from the earth, Christians
will find themselves being judged on the basis of *works,* with a view
*to overcoming or being overcome.*And that which is in view relative to
overcoming or being overcome is seen as having to do with *occupying
or being denied positions with Christ in His kingdom* (*cf.* Matt. 16:24-17:5;
24:45-51; 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-46; 19:11-27; I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:9-11;
I Thess. 1:5-10; 4:16-5:9; II Thess. 1:5-11).
Also, chapters two and three, viewed from another perspective,
present a history of the Church throughout the dispensation, synonymous with that seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter
thirteen. Both sections of Scripture present *a history of the Church in
relation to the Word of the Kingdom.* Both sections of Scripture reveal
the dispensation beginning *with Christians producing acceptable works*
(fruitfulness [Matt. 13:8, 23; Rev. 2:2, 3]) and ending *with Christendom
seen in a completely leavened state* (Matt. 13:33; Rev. 3:15-17). Then chapter four begins once again at the same point as previously seen in chapter one — with the Church being removed from the
earth into the heavens (vv. 1, 2). But this is only to reveal something
subsequent to events at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3). It is to reveal
the twenty-four elders relinquishing their crowns by casting them
before God’s throne (vv. 4, 10, 11).
This event will occur *immediately following*decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, as shown by *the rainbow* encircling the
throne of God (v. 3). The rainbow in Scripture appears *after* judgment
has occurred, after judgment is past. This is the manner in which
the rainbow is first seen in Scripture (Gen. 9:11-17), establishing an
unchangeable first-mention principle which governs its use at any
subsequent point in Scripture.
The rainbow encircled throne in Rev. 4:3 tells the reader that
events at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3) are *past.*
Then, the remainder of the chapter relates something intimately
associated and connected with the decisions and determinations which
will have been rendered at the judgment seat — the twenty-four elders
casting their crowns before God’s throne.
Overcoming Christians, ruling with Christ over the earth during
the coming age, are to wear crowns having to do with the domain
over which they rule — crowns having to do with the government
of the earth. And these crowns have existed since time immemorial,
since God established the government of the earth in the beginning. These crowns were originally worn by angels ruling under Satan in his unfallen state. However, since his rebellion against God’s
supreme power and authority, these crowns have been worn by two
classes of angels — those originally ruling with Satan, but refusing
to go along with him in his attempted coup; and those who did go
along with him, continuing to rule with him.
One group — the former, which can only be identified with the
twenty-four elders (two-thirds of the original contingent of angels
under Satan, represented by two sets of twelve crowned rulers) — will
relinquish their crowns willingly; but the other group — the latter,
seen in Rev. 12:4 (the other one-third of the angels under Satan, which
would be represented by a third set of twelve crowned rulers) — will
not relinquish their crowns willingly, resulting in their crowns having
to be taken by force.

(Note that “twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection,*and “three” is the number of *Divine perfection.* Three sets of twelve crowned rulers would show *Divine perfection in God’s original establishment of the government of the earth*— something which has not existed since Satan’s attempted coup [since those angels ruling under him (represented by the two sets of twelves) separated themselves from the other angels ruling under him (which could only be represented by a third set of twelve)].

But a restored Divinely perfect form of governmental rule over the earth will exist once again during the Messianic Era when crowns from all three sets of twelve — crowns from the complete original contingent of angels ruling with Satan over the earth — are brought together once again and given to man.)

Those relinquishing their crowns willingly will do so immediately following events at the judgment seat. For, at this time, *for the first time in man’s history,* a group from the human race will have been shown qualified to wear these crowns. And, also *for the first time in man’s history,*these angels can relinquish their crowns, with a view to others wearing them during the Messianic Era (Heb. 2:5).

Those angels continuing to reign with Satan though will not relinquish their crowns until the time of Christ’s return. Their crowns will be taken by force, for the time will be at hand. *For the first time in man’s history,* a group from the human race will be on hand to ascend the throne, having been shown qualified to wear these crowns.

(For a full discussion of the twenty-four elders in Revelation chapter four, in the preceding respect, refer to Chapter VII, “Crowns Cast Before God’s Throne,” in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)

*2) Revelation Chapters Five through Nineteen*

Revelation chapter five marks a major turning point in the closing book of Scripture. Material preceding this has to do directly with the Church, covering the complete dispensation (chs. 2, 3), but centering on events at the end of the dispensation (chs. 1b-4). These first four chapters center on events which begin with*the removal of the Church* (1:10; 4:1, 2), continue with*events surrounding the judgment seat*(chs. 1b-3), and end with *the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne* (4:4, 10, 11).

The removal of the Church will occur at *the end of the dispensation, preceding events at the judgment seat;*and the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne will occur *following events at the judgment seat, before the beginning of the Tribulation.*

Then, once all these events have occurred and all matters pertaining to these events have been taken care of, attention in the book is immediately directedto*the redemption of the forfeited inheritance.* Events in chapter five introduce the matter, and events in chapters sixthrough nineteen provide numerous details concerning this future redemptive work (*cf.* Rom. 8:20-22).

There is an exact parallel between the sequence of events seen in the first six parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the sequence of events seen in the first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation.

In the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, Christ’s dealings with the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, down by the seaside, are seen in the first four parables. Then, as Christ reenters the house, matters in the last three parables turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance (though the Church is equally in view relative to this redemption).

In the Book of Revelation, Christ’s dealings with the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom are seen in the first four chapters. Then, beginning in chapter five, matters turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance (though, again, the Church is equally in view relative to this redemption).

Then, the same things are seen when comparing the Books of Ruth and Esther with the Book of Revelation, or with the first six parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. The first three chapters of the Book of Ruth provide the background and foundational material (paralleling Rev. 1-4, or the first four parables in Matt. 13), and Boaz’s redemptive act in chapter four has to do with his purchase of the field, his redemption of the inheritance (paralleling Rev. 5-19, seen beginning with the fifth parable in Matt. 13). Then the Book of Esther points to the fact that Israel also has to be involved in the matter (paralleling Rev. 6-19, and the fifth and sixth parables in Matt. 13 [*cf.*Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:24-27]).

And, as the first three chapters of the Book of Ruth cannot be separated from the fourth chapter, or as the first four parables in Matt. 13 cannot be separated from the last three, or as that seen in the Book of Esther cannot be separated from the whole of the matter, neither can the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation be separate from the chapters which follow. Revelation chapter five simply continues from chapter four, and the Church (though absent) remains just as much in view as Ruth (though absent) remained in view while Boaz was performing his redemptive act in Ruth chapter four.

And matters must be viewed exactly the same in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Though Christ is back inside the house beginning with the fifth parable, the Church must remain in view relative to the redemption of the inheritance.

*a) The Search for One Found Worthy*

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz was a near kinsman who was able to redeem. And he is the one seen performing the required redemptive act, paying the required price, following a nearer kinsman relinquishing his right to redeem.

Boaz performed this redemptive act *following* Ruth becoming a member of the family (ch. 1), *following* Ruth gleaning in Boaz’s field and beating out that which she had gleaned throughout the time of the harvest (ch. 2), and *following*Ruth preparing herself to meet Boaz, a meeting which occurred on his threshing floor at midnight (ch. 3).

These first three chapters of the Book of Ruth cover the entirety of thepresent dispensation,paralleling thefirst fourparablesin Matthew chapter thirteen and the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation (viewed from both vantage points — a history of the Church during the present dispensation, and the Church in heaven at the end of the dispensation, appearing on Christ’s threshing floor).

Then, Boaz’s redemptive act finds its parallel with events beginning in Revelation chapter five, events which parallel the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure. The search in this chapter centers around *One able to redeem, One worthy to break the seals of the seven-sealed scroll seen in God’s right hand.*

A “strong angel” proclaims *in a loud voice,* “Who is worthy to open the book [‘scroll’], and to loose the seals thereof?” And no one “in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth” was found worthy, until attention was called to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (vv. 2-5).

One seen “in the midst” of God’s throne (an allusion to the source of all power, the center of all power, the place from which all power emanates), now described as “a Lamb,” rather than “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” comes and takes the scroll out of the right hand of His Father. He alone was found worthy, and the reason He was found worthy is given in both His description and that which is stated in the verses immediately following.

Specific attention is called to His being “a Lamb,” which can only be a reference to *His past work at Calvary.* Then, after He had taken the scroll from the right hand of His Father, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before “the Lamb [note, not *the Lion,* but *the Lamb*],” having harps and vials filled with odors, “which are the prayers of saints” (vv. 6-8).

Then the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy art thou to take the book [‘scroll’], and to open the seals thereof: *for thou wast slain [as the Lamb],* and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,

And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they shall reign upon [‘over’] the earth” (vv. 9b, 10, ASV).

A great multitude of angels then appeared “round about the throne and the beasts [‘living creatures’] and elders,” with their number described as “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” Andthisgreat multitudeproclaimed,“withaloudvoice”:

“Worthy is *the Lamb that was slain*to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings” (vv. 11, 12).

And, following this, attention is called to “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them” making a similar proclamation, in unison:

“Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto *the Lamb* forever and ever” (v. 13).

Note the continued reference to “the Lamb,” rather than to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Why is this the case? The answer is simple.
It is on *the basis of His work as “the Lamb”* that He is found worthy to take the scroll from His Father’s right hand and break the seals on the scroll. *Redemption is in view*, and it is because of His work as “the Lamb” (past) that *He is found worthy to perform this redemptive work, a redemption of the forfeited inheritance* (future).
And this is the reason that this matter is dealt with in the parable of the treasure (He sold all that He had [past]) prior to purchasing the field, prior to redeeming the inheritance (future). *It is ALL based on His past work as “the Lamb.”* Apart from this past work, there can be no future redeemed inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs.

(Redemption is always seen being effected through *the Lamb,* not through *the Lion.*Christ is referred to as *the Lion only once* in the Book of Revelation, but He is referred to as *the Lamb twenty-eight times* throughout the course of this book.)

*b) Redemption of the Purchased Possession*

The actual redemptive work, pertaining to the inheritance, begins with events in Revelation chapter six and carries through to events at the end of chapter nineteen. Events in chapter nineteen also have to do with another facet of this redemptive work. They have to do with the bride becoming Christ’s wife, portended by the marriage festivities (vv. 7-9) *occurring immediately preceding Christ’s return to complete His work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance* (vv. 11-21).

And, exactly as seen in the type in the Book of Ruth — Ruth becoming Boaz’s wife through his redemptive work (Ruth 4:1-10) — not only will Christ redeem the inheritance, *but, through this redemptive work, the bride will become the Lamb’s wife.*

Judgments seen throughout the time of the Son’s redemption of the inheritance are presented in the Book of Revelation under three sets of sevens — seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. As previously shown, “three” is the number of *Divine perfection;*and “seven” is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view.* Thus, the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials show *Divine perfection within these judgments,*which would be to say that they show *Divine perfection within the Son’s redemption of the inheritance.*

The search in chapter five was only for One found worthy to break *the seals.* Nothing is said in this chapter about a search for One worthy to sound the trumpets or to pour out the vials, and the reason for this is evident. The judgments seen through the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials are contained within the scope of the judgments under the seven seals.

The trumpet and vial judgments emanate from the breaking of the seventh seal (8:1, 2), with the seven vial judgments seen as a further description of the seven trumpet judgments, providing additional details (*cf.* Rev. 10:1-7; 11:15-19; 15:1ff). Thus, both the trumpet and vial judgments lie under the seventh seal, placing all the judgments within the scope of the seven-sealed scroll.

Christ, loosing the seals, *will bring ALL THINGS in this entire redemptive process to pass.
The inheritance will be redeemed, through judgment (chs. 6-19); and the bride — having previously been singled out and revealed at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3) — will THEN become Christ’s wife, ALL exactly in accord with the type in Ruth chapter four.*

(For more information on the redemption of the inheritance — as seen in the Book of Ruth, the Book of Esther, the Matt 13 parables, and the Book of Revelation — refer to the next chapter in this book, Chapter XI.

For a more exhaustive treatment of the subject, refer to Chapters VIII, IX of the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.
Then, Chapters X-XIX in this book [covering Rev. 6-10, 11b, 15, 16] deal with the judgments brought to pass through a breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll [from Rev. 5], providing specific information concerning exactly how the inheritance is redeemed.)

11

Parable of the Pearl

***Saved for a Purpose, Realizing an Inheritance***

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:
Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matt. 13:45, 46).

The parable of the pearl continues the thought of *redemption* from the previous parable, the parable of the treasure. The “Man” in both parables is *the Lord Jesus Christ,* and this Man selling all that He had in both parables is also the same, pointing to *Christ’s past, finished work at Calvary.*

But *the PURCHASE* which the Man made — *something different in each parable* — is separated in time from His work at Calvary. *The purchase in each parable*, seen as a redemptive act in each, *FOLLOWS* His work at Calvary.

That is, *NEITHER the purchase of the field* in the previous parable *NOR the purchase of the pearl* in the present parable is synonymous with or occurred at the same time as His finished work at Calvary.

Thus, in the chronological sequence of events in these two parables, Christ’s purchase of both *the field* and *the pearl* is seen occurring *FOLLOWING* His selling all that He had, *i.e., FOLLOWING* the events surrounding Calvary.

And, as will be shown, the purchase of *BOTH*“the field” and “the pearl” occurs*at the SAME time, through the SAME redemptive work.*
Within the chronological framework of all seven parables, this dual purchase is seen occurring at *a time FOLLOWING the present dispensation.*
And, in this respect, two millenniums *lie between Christ’s finished work at Calvary and the purchase seen in both of these parables* (*ref.* Chapter X in this book).

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Christ’s finished work at Calvary has to do with *man’s eternal salvation*, and there is no present or future work of Christ in this realm. *EVERYTHING is past.*

(Christ, *following His finished work,* “sat down on the right hand of God.” There was no chair in any part of the earthly tabernacle, for the sacrificial work of the O.T. priests was never finished. They could not sit down.

But Christ, *relative to His sacrificial work,*could sit down in the heavens, showing that this work was *FINISHED.”*

“And every priest *standeth* daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:
But thisman, after he hadofferedone sacrifice for sinsforever, *sat down* on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:11, 12; *cf*. John 19:30).

However, the blood of that sacrifice, presently on the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, is another matter. There is *a PRESENT work* of the Son in connection with His blood having been placed on the mercy seat. But this is *a work on behalf of those who have already been saved, on the basis of His past, sacrificial work at Calvary.*

The present work of the Son is that of *High Priest* [Heb. 9:11, 12; 10:19ff]. *He is presently providing a cleansing for Christians who sin, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary* [I John 1:7-2:2].

And this cleansing has *NOTHING to do with one’s eternal salvation*. It is *a cleansing provided for those who are already saved*, with a view to the One doing the cleansing bringing “many sons unto glory” at a future time [Heb. 2:10].)

There though, of necessity, is *a present work* being carried on within the Godhead pertaining to man’s eternal salvation. But this is *not a work* being carried on by the Son after any fashion. This is a work performed by the Spirit. The Spirit presently breathes life (spiritual life) into the one who has no life, based on the Son’s past finished work.

And through this complete work — *the past work* of the Son, and *the present work* of the Spirit — man, “dead in trespasses and sins,” not only *passes* “from death unto life” (*cf.* Gen. 1:2; 2:7; Ezek. 37:1-10; John 5:24; Eph. 2:1), but he now finds himself in a position to one day realize “that which is really life” (I Tim. 6:19b, literal translation).

The last words of Christ prior to His death at Calvary were, “It is finished [*lit.,* ‘It has been finished’]” (John 19:30). Christ used a perfect tense of the Greek verb *teleo (tetelestai),* which means to bring something “to an end,” or “to a completion.” The perfect tense points to action completed in past time, with the results of this action existing during present time *in a finished state.*

*EVERYTHING necessary to effect man’s eternal salvation had been finished at that point*, and Christ used this one Greek verb (*teleo*) in a perfect tense (*tetelestai*) to call attention to this fact. Then He simply “gave up the spirit [*lit.,* He ‘breathed out’] (Luke 23:46), for there was no need for Him to continue the sufferings which He was undergoing. *EVERYTHING had been completed, allowing the Spirit to now breathe life into the one having no life (man dead in trespasses and sins) on the basis of the Son’s finished work.*

But, as previously noted, the two purchases seen in the parables of the treasure and the pearl in Matt. 13:44-46 point to*a work of the Son BEYOND His work on Calvary.*

Thus, this latter work (a work actually subsequent to His work in the heavenly sanctuary) can have *NOTHING* to do with one’s eternal salvation, for that is based on *the Son’s past, finished work.* Rather, this latter work (as His present work in the heavenly sanctuary) has to do with *the PURPOSE for one’s salvation, the REASON one has been saved.*

(In the preceding respect, there is *a past, finished work* of the Son at Calvary; and, because of this past, finished work, the Son can perform *a present work* in the heavenly sanctuary.

Then, also because of His past work at Calvary, there can be *a future work* with respect to that seen in the symbolism of the purchase of both “the field” and “the pearl” in Matt. 13:44-46 —*a work which His present ministry in the sanctuary anticipates.*)

In the first of these two parables, in verse forty-four, the treasure points to Israel.*Israel* is God’s “peculiar treasure” (Ex. 19:5, 6; Ps. 135:4).
Then, in the second of these two parables, in verses forty-five and forty-six, *the Church* comes into view.
Pearls are found in oysters, which come from the sea. And the oyster, a species found in the water which lacks fins and scales, would be unclean to an orthodox Jew (Lev. 11:9-12). The fact that the pearl comes from a species considered unclean by the orthodox Jew, as well as the fact that the oyster bearing the pearl is found in the sea (which refers to the Gentiles), the pearl could not be another reference to Israel (continuing, in this respect, from the parable of the treasure). Rather, the pearl would have to refer to another entity within God’s dealings with man. The identity of the pearl, unlike the identity of the treasure in the previous parable, is not really given anywhere in Scripture in so many words per se. But, nonetheless, the intended symbolism through the use of the pearl can easily be determined. Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, the “pearl” can easily be seen as a reference to *the Church* (more specifically, *the bride*).
Christ gave these parables after He had gone back inside the house, and *the treasure* (Israel) comes into view because God will be dealing with Israel during this time, completing His dealings with the nation during Daniel’s Seventieth Week.
But Christ is not seen purchasing *the treasure* in the first of these two parables, as He is seen purchasing *the pearl* in the second. Rather, in the first parable, He is seen purchasing *the field* where the treasure was hidden. Thus, Christ purchases *the field* in the first of these two parables; then He purchases *the pearl* in the second. And the fact that these parables are about *the kingdom of the heavens* — *necessitating Christians*(the present recipients of the offer of the kingdom) being in view in relation to the redemption of the forfeited inheritance — will *ALONE* reveal that “the pearl” has to be identified with *the Church.* The parable of the treasure shows *one facet* of the purpose for man’s salvation, and the parable of the pearl shows *the other.*
The purchase of the field (the world) seen in the parable of the treasure has to do with *Christ’s future work of redeeming the forfeited inheritance* (seen in Rev. 6-19); and the purchase of the pearl is a reference to the bride (saved through His finished work at Calvary and revealed through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat [Rev. 1-4]) *becoming His wife* (portended by the marriage festivities in Rev. 19:7-9), whom He purchases through redeeming the inheritance. And all of this occurs on the basis of Christ being found worthy to perform this redemptive work — found worthy solely on the basis of His finished work as “the Lamb” (Rev. 5:6ff).
These two parables, along with most of the Book of Revelation, draw from a somewhat simple type in the Old Testament — a type set forth in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth. In this fourth chapter of Ruth, *Boaz is seen redeeming a forfeited inheritance, with Ruth becoming his wife through this redemptive act.* And this chapter relates the complete story of events seen relative to the purchases in the parables of the treasure and the pearl, along with that seen in Revelation chapters five through nineteen.
*NONE of these things in Matthew’s gospel or in the Book of Revelation can be properly understood APART FROM understanding this one type in the Old Testament.*
God provided the numerous types seen throughout the Old Testament for *a REASON.* These types have been placed there *to help explain the antitypes.* And these types are *IMPORTANT beyond degree, for they will, numerous times, open up and cast a flood of light on the various antitypes.*
And this particular type in the Book of Ruth is *ONE case in point, which can only become increasingly evident to anyone who begins to mine the treasures contained therein*.

**The Type — The Antitype**

Events in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth, where Boaz’s redemptive act is seen, must be understood within context.
These events occurred *AFTER* Ruth had become a member of the family (ch. 1), *AFTER* Ruth had gleaned in Boaz’s field and beat out that which she had gleaned throughout the time of harvest (ch. 2), *AFTER* Ruth had prepared herself for meeting Boaz (ch. 3a), and *AFTER*Ruth had met Boaz on his threshing floor at midnight (ch. 3b).
And moving these things over into the antitype, Christ’s redemptive act, seen in this fourth chapter of Ruth (typified by Boaz’s redemptive act), will occur *at EXACTLY the same time.*
It will occur *AFTER* individuals have become members of the family (have become Christians), *AFTER* those in the family have gleaned in the field (the world) and beat out that which they have gleaned throughout the time of harvest, *AFTER* those in the family have prepared themselves for meeting Christ, and *AFTER* they have met Christ on His threshing floor at midnight (met Christ at His judg- ment seat, at the termination of the present dispensation).

(The “threshing floor” and “midnight” both refer to *judgment* — one to *place,* and the other to *time.*See Chapter VIII in this book.)

Thus, Christ’s finished work at Calvary is not dealt with per se in the fourth chapter of Ruth. Rather, this work is simply inferred or assumed. This matter surrounding Christ’s finished work at Calvary was dealt with back in chapter one where Ruth and Orpah found themselves members of the family *through death.* The death of their husbands had dissolved the marriage relationship itself, and they were then members of the family only *through death, the death of others.*

And Christians are members of the family through exactly the same means — *through death, the death of Another.*
This is why Paul, when first going to Corinth and finding a city filled with unsaved Gentiles, limited himself to one simple message — “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). It was Christ Who had died for their sins (I Cor. 15:3; I Thess. 5:10), and the only way they could become members of the family was through *the death of Another.*
Thus, the message surrounding that which occurred at Calvary is seen in chapter one of the Book of Ruth, not in chapter four. The redemptive act seen in chapter four — type or antitype — is a subsequent work on behalf of those who are already members of the family (though *not a work for all family members*). Ruth alone is seen in Boaz’s redemptive act. Orpah, also a member of the family through death, had turned back (*cf.* Luke 9:62; 17:32). And this redemptive work is seen occurring *after* the dispensation has run its course (Ruth 2, 3a) and*those who have gone on, like Ruth, have been singled out*(Ruth 3b).

*1) The Nearer Kinsman*

Different kinds of legal matters within the Jewish economy at the time events in the Book of Ruth occurred were carried on at the gates of the various cities scattered throughout the land, at the entrance way into these cities. Elders of a particular city would gather at the gate of that city and await anyone in the city who might have a legal matter to carry out or resolve.

This is the reason chapter four begins with the statement, “Then went Boaz up to the gate…” (4:1). And, as seen in Gentile cities of that day as well, this is the apparent reason that Lot was seen seated in the gate of Sodom when the two angels entered Sodom in Gen. 19:1. Lot was apparently among those at the gate (among the elders of the city) who were there to carry out or to resolve legal matters on behalf of those in the city.

Boaz, at the gate, first stopped a nearer kinsman who had come by, and he instructed the nearer kinsman to sit in a certain place (v. 1). Boaz then singled out ten elders who were at the gate, took them aside, and instructed them to sit in the same proximity as the nearer kinsman (v. 2).

Boaz then explained the matter at hand, directing his remarks to the nearer kinsman, but making sure that the ten elders heard as well. He needed all of them to hear that which he had to say, for they all had to act — the nearer kinsman first, then the ten elders.

The subject surrounded an inheritance belonging to Naomi, which had been forfeited. Boaz wanted to pay the required price and redeem this inheritance, but there was a nearer kinsman who had first choice to act in this capacity. And the nearer kinsman, after hearing about this forfeited inheritance as Boaz explained the matter, said that he would redeem the inheritance (vv. 3, 4).

However, Boaz wasn’t through explaining all that was involved. Boaz then said,

“What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance” (v. 5).

The one who redeemed the inheritance, whether the nearer kinsman or Boaz, would also, at the same time, be redeeming (purchasing) Ruth; and Ruth, through this redemptive process, would become his wife. This was something which would *automatically occur* within the process of redeeming the forfeited inheritance, redeeming the field.

Ruth, through this redemptive process, was also being redeemed (purchased), and would *automatically* become the wife of the one performing this redemptive act.

Much controversy has surrounded the identity (with respect to the antitype) of the nearer kinsman. However, there should be no controversy, for the nearer kinsman *was able to redeem.*And the only One *able to redeem* in the antitype is the One Who shed His blood at Calvary (Rev. 5:1ff).

And though it was the Son Who shed His blood and died at Calvary, this was, as well, *the blood of God*(Acts 20:28). This was *the day God died.*

Thus, just as there were two ( *only two* [v. 4b]) who were able to redeem in the type (insofar as that shown by the account is concerned), there are also Two (*only Two*) Who are able to redeem in the antitype. And these Two in the antitype are the Father and His Son, though the Father has placed all redemptive work in the hands of His Son.

Seeing the type foreshadowing God the Father in this respect will explain the apparent reason why the nearer kinsman couldn’t redeem the inheritance and take Ruth as his wife. As seen in the antitype, the nearer kinsman, though able to redeem, wasn’t free to take Ruth as his wife.

Though a divorce decree presently exists between God and Israel, God, nevertheless, is committed to Israel relative to restoration and remarriage.
Thus, whether in the type (past) or in the antitype (future), the Nearer Kinsman wasn’t free/won’t be free to perform the redemptive act. Such an act would have “marred [‘destroyed,’ ‘ruined’]” (type), would “mar [‘destroy,’ ‘ruin’]” (antitype), the Nearer Kinsman’s Own inheritance.

*2) Boaz’s Work*

There was a law in Israel concerning the nearer kinsman either refusing or forfeiting his right to redeem an inheritance. And a central feature of this law had to do with the nearer kinsman relinquishing His right through removing his shoe and handing it to the kinsman next in line to redeem (*cf.*Deut. 25:7-9).

Thus, in keeping with this law, when the nearer kinsman couldn’t redeem Naomi’s inheritance (though, through no apparent fault of his own), he removed his shoe and handed it to Boaz (Ruth 4:7, 8). This act showed to everyone present (in this case, Boaz and the ten elders) that he had relinquished his redemptive rights to the kinsman next in line. He had relinquished his rights to Boaz.

Thus, once this had been done, Boaz was free to redeem the forfeited inheritance. And the ten elders were also free to recognize Boaz as the one now able to act in this capacity, along with recognizing the price which he was to pay as legal and binding.

And, not only was this the case, but once the complete transaction had been carried out, it would also be recognized that Ruth was Boaz’s wife. Ruth *automatically* became Boaz’s wife through this legal transaction carried out at the gate of the city, witnessed by ten elders, among others present.

“And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day” (vv. 9, 10).

This was followed by all those who were present recognizing that which had occurred, along with their pronouncing a blessing on the union which had resulted from this transaction — that of Boaz and Ruth. And the remainder of the chapter, bringing the account to a close, records the genealogy of Boaz through this union (vv. 11ff).

“…Boaz begat Obed,
And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David” (vv. 21b, 22).

Boaz and Ruth’s great grandson was King David. And David, in his reign over Israel, typifies Christ in His coming reign over the earth as the greater Son of David (*cf.* II Sam. 7:12-14; Matt. 21:9, 15; Luke 1:27, 31-33).

And, as David reigned over Israel in Saul’s stead, following a time of rejection, Christ will reign over the earth in Satan’s stead, following a time of rejection. And, just as those who were faithful to David during his time of rejection were elevated to positions of power with David when he ascended the throne, so will it be when Christ ascends the throne. Christ will elevate those faithful to Him during His time of rejection to positions of power with Him when He ascends the throne.

*EVERYTHING about Ruth chapter four is MESSIANIC within its scope of fulfillment.*
This chapter deals with *the redemption of a piece of land*, which would be *a field,*pointing to *the world*in the antitype; this chapter deals with *Ruth becoming Boaz’s wife*, which, in the antitype, would point to *the bride becoming Christ’s wife;*and this chapter ends with *the mention of David, pointing to the greater Son of David in the antitype.*
The Book of Ruth ends *EXACTLY* where the opening section of Scripture in Genesis ends (Gen. 1:1-2:3) — detailing events having to do with the seventh day, the Messianic Era out ahead. The inheritance (a field), once it had been redeemed, then belonged to Boaz and Ruth (now his wife) in the type.
*And the inheritance (the world), once it has been redeemed, will belong to Christ and His Bride (who will then be His wife) in the antitype.
And, in the antitype, Christ as King (as the greater Son of King David), with His wife as consort queen, will rule over the redeemed domain.*

**The Bride Becomes His Wife**

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur *EXACTLY in accord with the type set forth in Ruth chapter four*, *NOT in accord with the way things are done in the modern world, whether in the East or in the West.*

As Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance, so will Christ purchase His bride through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance (forfeited by the first Adam in Genesis chapter three [*cf.* Rom. 8:20-22]).

And, as Ruth *automatically* became Boaz’s wife through this redemptive process, *so will it be with Christ and His bride.*
The bride (having previously been revealed at the judgment seat) *will automatically become Christ’s wife through His redemption of the forfeited inheritance.*

*1) Redemption Completed*
The redemption of the forfeited inheritance is seen occurring in
Revelation chapters six through nineteen.
The seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five contains the
redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance (the earth), and chapters
six through nineteen reveal the seals being broken and these terms
being carried out (*ref.* Chapter X in this book).
Once these redemptive terms have been carried out, the bride will
become Christ’s wife. Through a redemptive work having occurred
throughout the preceding seven years and completed with events
seen in Rev. 19:11-21, *Christ will not only have purchased the field (the
earth — fifth parable) but He will have purchased the pearl as well (the bride,
now His wife — sixth parable).
He will have purchased the bride, for whom the Spirit had searched during
the previous dispensation (Gen. 24), as His wife, throughpurchasing the field.*

In anticipation of the completion of this redemptive work, allowing the bride to become Christ’s wife, note the wedding festivities in Revelation chapter nineteen immediately preceding Christ’s return:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage [‘marriage festivities’] of the lamb is come, and his wife [‘bride’] hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [‘righteous acts’] of saints.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper [or, ‘marriage banquet, feast’] of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (vv. 7-9; *cf.* Rev. 21:9).

*And note the immediately preceding reference to the reverential awe and excitement in heaven surrounding the redemption of the forfeited inheritance at this point in the redemptive process, which leads into the wedding festivities and the completion of the redemption of the inheritance.*

The twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, “fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, *Amen; Alleluia”* (v. 4). Then “a voice came out of the throne, saying, *Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great”* (v. 5).

Then a voice was heard, described as that of “a great multitude… many waters… mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”* (v. 6).

And even John, having seen all this, could do little more than *fall at the feet* of the one showing him these things (v. 10).
Thus, the Book of Revelation, up to this point in the book, deals with the Church more extensively than is often realized. This book begins with the Church removed into heaven and judged, followed by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne (chs. 1-4). Then it continues with the search for One found worthy to loose the seals of the seven-sealed scroll — containing the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance (ch. 5). And, in succeeding chapters, covering Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, leading into events surrounding Christ’s return, the book deals with the inheritance being redeemed (allowing the bride to become Christ’s wife).
The redemption of the inheritance in chapters six through nineteen has to do with *the domain which Christ and His wife, His consort queen (ch. 19), will rule over during the succeeding Messianic Era (ch. 20).* And it is in the preceding respect that events in these chapters, dealing with Israel and the nations on earth, also have to do with the Church in heaven.

(For more information on the redemption of the inheritance, refer to Chapters VIII, IX in the author’s book, *The Time of the End*.)
*2) The Marriage Festivities*

When Scripture deals with the “marriage” of Christ and His bride, as in Rev. 19:7-9, the reference is *ALWAYS to festivities surrounding the marriage, NOT to a marriage itself.*

As previously shown, *there will be NO marriage per se*,*as we think of marriage in our modern-day culture. There WASN’T one in the type, and there WON’T be one in the antitype either.* And this is an easy matter to see in both the type (Ruth 4) and the antitype (Rev. 5-19).

The wedding festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son will occur in heaven *immediately before* the completion of the redemption of the forfeited inheritance. Though these festivities immediately precede the completion of the redemption of the inheritance, *the ENTIRE redemptive process MUST be carried out BEFORE the bride can become Christ’s wife.* And completing this order of events can be clearly seen beginning in Rev. 19:7-9, where these festivities are seen occurring *immediately preceding*Christ’s return to the earth to finish His work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance (19:11ff).

Near the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, He gave a parable concerning a whole panorama of events surrounding these marriage festivities, seen in Matt. 22:2-14. And this parable was given within the framework of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, first to Israel, then to the Church.

*a) Anticipated in a Parable (Matt. 22:2-14).*

This parable begins with a King arranging all the various festivities for the wedding of His Son, a royal affair (v. 2). Then, following these preparations, the King sent forth His servants to call those who had been invited; but they wouldn’t come (v. 3).

Another call was issued, but those who had been invited still wouldn’t come. And not only did they ignore this second call, but they made light of the whole matter, even going so far as to mistreat and kill those extending the offer (vv. 4-6).

And when the King heard what had happened, His anger was such that He sent forth His armies to both destroy those individuals and to burn their city (v. 7).

Then, the call was sent forth to an entirely different group of individuals. Some from this group heeded the invitation, but others paid little to no attention. And, in the end, two types of individuals are seen — “both bad and good.” Those spoken of as “bad” hadn’t prepared themselves to attend the wedding festivities, *and they, resultingly, didn’t possess wedding garments*; but those spoken of as “good” had prepared themselves,*and they, resultingly, did possess wedding garments* (vv. 8-10).

And the end result of this invitation is then presented. Those who had heeded the call and had made proper preparations, *possessing wedding garments, were allowed to participate in the marriage festivities.*

*But those who had disregarded or had rejected the call, NOT having made proper preparations, NOT possessing wedding garments, were NOT allowed to participate in the marriage festivities. They were NOT even allowed within. Instead, they found themselves in the darkness outside* (vv. 11-14).

*b) That to Which the Parable Refers*

The parable of the marriage festivities in Matt. 22:2-14 covers the whole panorama of that seen in the New Testament, from Matthew chapter one through the first part of Revelation chapter nineteen. This parable covers God’s complete dealings, throughout the New Testament, with both Israel and the Church in relation to the kingdom of the heavens; and it extends up to and includes the marriage festivities in Rev. 19:7-9, preceding the Messianic Era.

The kingdom of the heavens (with a view to the wedding festivities, seen in the parable) was extended to Israel through the gospel accounts, Israel rejected the offer, and the kingdom was taken from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43). Then, in the opening chapters of the Book of Acts, another entity (the Church) was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Acts 2:1ff; *cf.* Matt. 16:16-19).

But, as in the parable, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, something seen throughout the Book of Acts. The one now in possession of the kingdom (the infant Church, among others [Jews who had heeded the message]) re-offered it to Israel, beginning in Acts chapter two and ending in chapter twenty-eight.

However, as in the parable, rejection again occurred; and the servants extending the offer were mistreated, and even killed (Acts 4:17-21; 5:40, 41; 7:54-60). And, because of this, the same thing again occurred as seen in the parable. Between 66 and 70 A.D., Titus and his Roman legions were allowed by the Lord to come against the Israelites in Jerusalem after a manner which resulted in the slaying, uprooting, and dispersion of the Jewish people, along with the destruction of their city.

The call was then extended only to those seen in the parable as *other than the Jewish people,* those out in “the highways,” *Christians.*
This part of the parable is covered in the New Testament by the epistles, though some of the epistles were written during the Acts period when the offer was still open to Israel (with the offer also open to Christians throughout this period as well). And, as in the parable, some Christians would heed the call, others wouldn’t.

(The epistles — all of them — center around the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians during the present dispensation. And these epistles, consequently, provide various facets of information surrounding this offer.)

And, as in the parable, the end of the matter will witness some Christians prepared to attend these festivities and others unprepared to attend. Proper or improper preparation is given in both Matt. 22:10-12 and Rev. 19:7, 8.

It has to do with *the possession or nonpossession of a wedding garment. Those properly dressed will be allowed to participate in the festivities, looking forward to that which lies ahead — the Son’s coming reign over the earth, with His consort queen.*

*But those improperly dressed will be denied entrance into these festivities and be left in the darkness outside,* with *NOTHING*to look forward to during the Son’s coming reign, for they will occupy *NO place in His kingdom.* They will occupy *NO place among those forming the Son’s wife, His consort queen, at the completion of the redemption of the inheritance.*

12

Parable of the Net

***Purpose for Salvation Realized, Not Realized***

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:
Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.
So shall it be at the end of the world [‘age’]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,
And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:47-50).

The last of the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the parable of the net, begins by briefly mentioning events occurring throughout the present dispensation (v. 47); then the parable in the three succeeding verses (vv. 48-50) immediately moves to and centers around events occurring at *the END of the age, AFTER the dispensation has run its course*(seen in the first four parables) *and AFTER the inheritance has been redeemed and the bride has become Christ’s wife*(seen in the fifth and sixth parables).

The “net, that was cast into the sea” (v. 47) is a reference *to God’s work among the Gentiles throughout the present dispensation.* The “sea” refers to *the Gentiles,* and the “net” cast into the sea, drawing from the sea (cast out among the Gentiles, drawing from the Gentiles) refers *to God working among and removing from the Gentiles “a people for his name”* (Acts 15:14).

*AFTER Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens, ANOTHER nation, separate from Israel, was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected* (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11).

A nation, *which was neither Jewish nor Gentile*, was called into

155 existence to be accorded the opportunity to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed. And this new nation, comprising *a new creation* “in Christ,” was to be taken from both of the prior two creations — from both the Jews and the Gentiles — though mainly from the Gentiles.

God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would remove *from the Gentiles* “a people for his name,” though “a remnant according to the election of grace [believing Jews]” was to be included as well (Rom. 11:5). And, according to the parable of the net, the removal of these people had to do with *the kingdom of the heavens.*

This removal is likened to *a net which was cast out among the Gentile nations*, and those removed from the Gentiles via the net (becoming part of *the new creation* “in Christ”) are seen being removed *for a PURPOSE.*

Their removal, as previously seen, has to do with *the kingdom of the heavens.*Their removal is with a view *to their occupying positions in the proffered kingdom, the kingdom previously rejected by and taken from Israel.*

Thus, the removal from the sea itself *is NOT the central subject of the parable.* Rather, this information was given in order to introduce the central subject — *the PURPOSE for their removal from the sea.*

All three of the parables which Christ gave after He had reentered the house draw from previous events — events occurring either *before or during* the present dispensation — but these parables center around events occurring *after* the dispensation has run its course. These parables have to do centrally with events occurring at the very end of the age, during and immediately following the time when God completes His dealings with Israel.

Events in these parables occur during the Tribulation and during the time immediately following Christ’s return. In this respect, they occur during the last seven years of Man’s Day and at the very first of the Lord’s Day, which immediately follows (during Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week [9:24-27] and during the seventy-five days immediately following, seen at the end of Daniel’s prophecy [12:11-13]).

Events in the last of the three parables given back inside the house (parable of the net) *chronologically follow events in the preceding two parables* (parables of the treasure and pearl). As previously stated, *events in all three of these closing parables are seen in a chronology of this nature.*

Each of these parables begins by referring to events in past time. But the central subject of each parable is *NOT about these past events*. Rather, the central subject of each parable *RESTS on these past events*and has to do with *FUTURE events, events occurring AFTER the dispensation has run its course.*

*ALL three* of these parables have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens,* and *ALL three* have to do with events which move toward *the SAME revealed goal* — *the end of the age and the beginning of the next age, the end of Man’s Day and the beginning of the Lord’s Day.*

**The Separation**

Those removed from the sea during the present dispensation (v. 47) are seen being dealt with at the end of the age after a revealed fashion. They are seen being separated into *TWO main categories and THEN dealt with according to the category in which they had previously been placed* (vv. 48ff).

Once those removed from the sea via the net have been brought “to shore,” the picture in the parable relates a separation of “the good” from “the bad.” And once separated,*the GOOD are gathered into vessels, but the BAD are cast away* (v. 48). Then the next verse reveals *HOW* this will be accomplished — *carried out by angels* (v. 49).

*EXACTLY the same picture* was presented earlier in this sequence of parables, at the end of the second parable, *the parable of the wheat and tares.*
There was a harvest, followed by a separation of the wheat and the tares. *The tares* were bound in bundles to be burned, but *the wheat*was gathered into the Master’s barn (v. 30).
And after the Lord had gone back inside the house, prior to giving the last three parables, He gave the explanation to that which had oc- curred at the close of the parable of the wheat and tares, which would be *the SAME* as that occurring at the close of the three parables which He was about to give:
The preceding two verses *parallel* the two verses under discussion in the parable of the net (vv. 48, 49). These verses reveal a separation of “the wheat” from “the tares,” a separation of “the good” from “the bad.” And this separation will occur at “the end of this age.”

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [‘age’].
The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Matt. 13:40, 41).

(Events occurring at the end of the age, depicted in both the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the net, are *the SAME.* These two parables simply present*TWO different pictures of the SAME thing.*

Note that the things depicted in these two parables *do NOT have to do with events at Christ’s judgment seat.*The things depicted in these parables have to do with *subsequent events, occurring at least seven years later, based on previous decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat.*)

*1) Subject of the Parables*

Bear in mind that the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen — all seven of them — have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens.* They have *NOTHING* to do with salvation by grace through faith (though salvation, with respect to eternal verities, would be alluded to several places in these parables [*e.g.,* in the last parable through*a removal from the sea*]).

Salvation by grace through faith is simply *NOT* the subject seen throughout these parables (also in Mark. 2 and Luke 6). And when these parables deal with a separation (as seen in the second and seventh parables), along with the results of this separation, *everything stated must be taken at face value and related to the subject at hand.*

And whether or not this lines up with man’s ideologies or his doctrinal statements in the realm of eschatology (it usually doesn’t) is of *NO moment whatsoever.* An omniscient God, Who sees and knows the end as well as He sees and knows the beginning, has spoken.

God has established these parables, structured them a certain way, and placed them in a particular order and place in His Word. And that which God has established, along with the manner in which He has established it, is *the END of the matter.*

In the closing parable, God Himself has revealed to man *the END of ALL that which had been dealt with in the preceding six parables.*
There will first be a separation of those taken from the sea. This separation will occur at the end of the age (which will *FOLLOW*events surrounding the judgment seat and the subsequent marriage festivities of the Lamb), it will be carried out by angels, and it will occur in relation to entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom. Thus, *the subject of ALL seven parables centers around the proffered kingdom of the heavens.
This subject is given at the beginning of each parable, something which CANNOT possibly be missed. And this subject MUST be kept in view throughout these parables, else the parables cannot be properly understood.*

*2) Those Being Dealt with in the Parables*

Those being dealt with throughout the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, as seen in previous studies, are *the saved ALONE.*
Scripture *DOESN’T* deal with the unsaved in relation to the message which pervades these parables — a message pertaining to *the kingdom of the heavens.* The unsaved, when dealt with regarding spiritual matters, are *ALWAYS* dealt with only in relation to the message of salvation by grace through faith, *NEVER* in relation to the message of the kingdom. *The message of the kingdom is for the saved ALONE, something which can be aptly illustrated from any of the seven parables.*
But note the closing parable in this respect. Those dealt with in this parable are seen being removed from the sea via a net which had been cast out into the sea. That is, within the symbolism used, the parable pictures individuals being removed from the Gentiles; and their removal is for *a revealed PURPOSE* — *a purpose which, for part of them, would NOT be realized.*
They were removed from the sea *strictly on the basis of their having been in the net.* And, once removed, they were no longer associated with the sea. That would be to say, once removed, they were no longer associated with the Gentiles.
Thus, their removal from the sea is a metaphorical way of saying that they had been removed from the Gentiles. And, if removed from the Gentiles, within the time-frame seen in the previous six parables, there’s only one group with which they could possibly have then been associated — *the “one new man”*(Eph. 2:15). They had become part of *the new creation*“in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17).
A person is either a Jew, a Gentile, or a Christian. And any terminology which fails to clearly distinguish between these three creations — *e.g.,* “Jewish Christian,” “Gentile Christian,” “professor” (as opposed to “possessor”) — emanates from man, not from the Scriptures. Scripture sees the matter as completely black or white, never as a gray area lying between any two of the three.
A person is *EITHER a new creation* “in Christ,” *or he is NOT. And, if he is NOT, then he has to be EITHER a Jew*or *a Gentile.
The matter is THAT simple.
And, if this were understood, along with understanding that all of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen are about the kingdom of the heavens, there would be far less confusion when interpreting these parables.*

(Though Scripture makes a clear distinction between *Jew, Gentile,* and *Christian,* Scripture sometimes refers to believing individuals removed from the Jews or the Gentiles through reference to their national origin — “Jew” and “Gentile” [*e.g.,* Acts 28:28; Rom. 1:13, 16; 2:9, 10; Gal. 1:16; 2:2; Eph. 3:6, 8]. This was something seen during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel [33-62 A.D.], allowing an identifying distinction to exist between believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

But Scripture *NEVER*refers to such individuals as Jewish Christians” or “Gentile Christians,” for Scripture *NEVER* brings two of the three creations together in this manner. And when “Jew” or “Gentile” is used after this fashion, the context is *ALWAYS very clear that those being referenced are individuals removed from the Jews or the Gentiles, not Jews or Gentiles per se.*

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *The Study of Scripture*, Chapter VI, “Jew, Gentile, Christian.”)

And, in keeping with the preceding, *Scripture NEVER pictures a mixture of saved and unsaved individuals through the use of a metaphor such as that seen in the parable of the net* — *individuals removed from the sea, removed from the Gentiles.* The picture explainsitself, if allowedto sodo.

(A similar picture is presented by the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3. *Christians ALONE are being referenced and dealt with throughout the messages to all seven Churches.*

The word “Church” is the translation of a Greek word which means *called out* [Greek, *ekklesia,* a compound word from *ek,* “out” and *kelsis,* “to call”]. *ONLY the saved have been called out; ONLY the saved can comprise a Church.*

Thus, referring to a Church as comprised of the unsaved, or both saved and unsaved individuals, would be*an oxymoron.*)

*ALL* in the net had been removed from the sea, and *ALL* those who had been removed from the sea were no longer associated with that which the sea represented. They were no longer associated with the Gentiles. Rather, following their removal, they were associated with an entirely separate and distinct creation — *the new creation,*“in Christ.”

And their removal, along with everything which followed, was with a view to *the kingdom of the heavens.
Eternal verities are NOT seen in the matter at all. They CAN’T be seen. Such would be an impossibility.*
The matter surrounding their eternal destiny *was settled at the time they were removed from the sea.* And, had it not been settled, there could have been no removal. They could only have remained in the sea.

**The Furnace of Fire**

*ONLY one group of individuals* — though separated into two classes —couldpossibly beinviewthroughtheuseoftheexpressions,“good” and “bad,” or “just” and “wicked” (vv. 48, 49).

*ALL had been removed from the sea; ALL had been removed from the Gentiles.* Thus, *NO room could possibly exist for an inclusion of unsaved individuals in this parable.* By the very nature of the subject matter (*the kingdom of the heavens*) and those being dealt with in this parable (those removed from the sea), *ONLY the saved could possibly be in view.*

And, viewing that to which this parable refers, these saved individuals are seen being dealt with on the basis of prior decisions and determinations — decisions and determinations which will have previously been made at the judgment seat.

And these decisions and determinations, emanating from the judgment seat, will have been based on prior faithfulness to one’s calling (judgment will be on the basis of “works,” but the works being judged will have resulted from *faithfulness,* or *unfaithfulness* [I Cor. 3:12-15; *cf.* Heb. 11:17-19, 31; James 2:21-25]).

But seeing *the saved ALONE* being dealt with in this parable presents major problems for numerous Christians, for some of those in the parable are cast into “the furnace of fire.” And these same Christians, who would never consider thinking along the lines of Christians being cast into such a place, are invariably forced into an erroneous position, resulting in an erroneous interpretation. They are forced into the position of seeing *saved and unsaved individuals (“good” and “bad”) being dealt with in the parable, along with seeing these individuals being dealt with together, at the same time, in relation to eternal life or eternal damnation* (*ALL a Scriptural impossibility*).

The preceding though is simply *NOT* what Scripture has to say about the matter. Scripture is clear that the parable deals with *the saved ALONE,* and these saved individuals are dealt with in relation to *the coming kingdom.*

And the fact that those described as “bad” and “wicked” are cast into “the furnace of fire”*MUST be understood within this framework. This MUST be understood within the framework of BOTH those who are being dealt with and that which is being dealt with* — *CHRISTIANS, and the KINGDOM.*

Thus, to deal with this parable on the basis of eternal verities, with the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire, is *COMPLETELY outside the scope of the subject matter seen in any of these seven parables.* Such a teaching, derived from these parables, is *BOTH textually and contextually wrong.* Any thought of dealing with any of these parables after this fashion, from a Scriptural standpoint, *could not even be open for discussion.*

If the text is dealt with in a literal sense, apart from metaphors, *ONLY one possible conclusion can be reached.* At the end of the age a segment of the saved, a segment of Christians, is going to be cast into what is called in this parable, “the furnace of fire.” And that is exactly what Christ had previously stated within His explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares:

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity;
And shall cast them [*i.e.,* the offensive and lawless ones, the tares in this parable, those doing the works of Satan] into a [‘the’] furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41, 42).

Or, note the same thing in the parable of the net: So, exactly what is being dealt with through these two references to “the furnace of fire”? Should the expression be looked upon in a literal sense, referring to an actual furnace of fire? Or, is this a con- tinuation of the metaphorical language seen earlier in the parables, describing something related to but apart from a literal understanding of the reference?

“So shall it be at the end of the world [‘age’]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,
And shall cast them [the wicked] into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (vv. 49, 50).

When a person begins studying related Scripture having to do with “Gehenna,” “outer darkness [*lit.,* ‘the outer darkness, ‘the darkness outside’]” and “the lake of fire” he will find exactly the same teaching as seen in these two parables.

That seen in Matt. 13:42, 50 is *NOT something peculiar to the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the net.*Rather, it is merely part of *the SAME teaching seen so many places elsewhere in the New Testament* (*cf.* John 15:1-6; II Thess. 1:5-10; Heb. 6:7-9; 10:26-31; Jude 20-23).

In this respect, note how teachings concerning *Gehenna, the outer darkness,*and*the lake of fire* appear in Scripture.
*1) Gehenna, The Outer Darkness*

*Gehenna* is an Anglicized Greek word (*Geenna* in the Greek text) used twelve times in the New Testament. The word appears eleven times in the three synoptic gospels (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5) and once in the Epistle of James (3:6).

Christ alone used the word in the gospel accounts. And *He ALWAYS used the word in contexts having to do with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens.*

Then, in James, the word appears in a text having to do with the tongue — “…it [the tongue] is set on fire of hell [*‘Gehenna’*].” And, though the word is used in a somewhat different sense in James, *it appears within a context having to do with the saving of the soul and the coming kingdom* (*cf.* 1:12, 21; 2:5, 14-26; 5:7, 8, 19, 20).

*Gehenna* (*Geenna*) is the Greek word for *Hinnom*from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. *Hinnom* was the name given to a valley south of Jerusalem during Joshua’s day, named for the son of a person whose name was “Hinnom” (Joshua 15:8; 18:16).

And, though this valley was used at times as a place where human sacrifices were offered during Old Testament days (II Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31), the valley was no more than the place where the refuse from Jerusalem was discarded at the time Christ was on earth.

(The word, *Hinnom,* has simply been transliterated in the English text of the Old Testament; but the same thing has not been done with *Gehenna* [*Geenna,* for *Hinnom*] in most English texts of the New Testa- ment. Rather, in most versions, *Gehenna* [*Geenna*] has been translated “hell” each of the twelve times that it appears in the New Testament, resulting in confusion.)

Thus, *Gehenna,* at the time Christ and James used the word, was simply the name of the place where those in Jerusalem discarded their refuse. Even dead bodies (criminals, etc.) were, at times, cast into this place; and the fires burned continuously.

In this respect, Christ was doing no more than referencing a place where the refuse from the city of Jerusalem was discarded. And James was associating the misuse of the tongue with this same place.

Remaining within the gospel accounts, being cast into *Gehenna* always carries an identical association and meaning. Textually, in the gospels, being cast into *Gehenna is ALWAYS associated with separation from regality within Christ’s kingdom.*

It matters not which of the eleven references a person checks, *he will find EXACTLY the same thing each time. Gehenna*is *NEVER used in the gospel accounts in a context dealing with the unsaved and eternal verities. Rather, the word ALWAYS appears in texts set within contexts having to do SOLELY with the saved in relation to the coming kingdom.*

And “outer darkness” is used exactly the same way in the three instances in which the expression appears, all in Matthew’s gospel (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). The use of outer darkness is simply another way in which the Lord dealt with the same issue among the same group of people (the Jewish people, in relation to the proffered kingdom).

Viewing the matter from one perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in the place where the refuse from the city was discarded, *OUTSIDE the city.*

Viewing the matter from the other perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in a place separated from the One Who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). With respect to occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom, they will find themselves in *a place OUTSIDE,* a place associated with

*darkness*instead of light — *the darkness OUTSIDE.*

The use of *Gehenna* and *outer darkness (the outer darkness, the darkness outside)* are simply two metaphorical ways which Christ used *to call attention to EXACTLY the same thing.*

(These expressions — *Gehenna, the outer darkness* — were used in the gospel accounts during and immediately following that time when the kingdom of the heavens was offered to Israel at Christ’s first coming.

With Israel’s rejection of the proffered kingdom, the kingdom was taken from Israel and an entirely new entity [*the one new man*“in Christ”] was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [Matt. 21:33-46; I Peter 2:9-11].

And with these events brought to pass, *Gehenna*and*the outer darkness,* as previously used relative to the Jewish people, would now be used relative to Christians.

These expressions are used in Scripture relative to *the recipients of the proffered kingdom [the kingdom of the heavens],* whether Israel in past time or Christians during the present time.)

*2) The Lake of Fire*

The description of “the lake which burneth with fire and brim - stone” in Rev. 21:8 is another way in which Scripture deals with *the SAME thing again.* “The lake of fire” in this passage is described as not only the place where unsaved man from the previous chapter (vv. 11-15) will spend eternity but also the place where Christians who do not overcome (the world, the flesh, and the Devil) during the present dispensation will find themselves during the coming dispensation.

And this, of course, would be the same as Christians being cast into “the furnace of fire” in Matt. 13:42, 50.
The same thing is seen in the second of the seven overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three. These two chapters record seven short epistles to seven Churches, and there is an overcomer’s promise at the end of each epistle. “To him that overcometh…” “He that overcometh…” (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).
These epistles are addressed to*saved individuals* (those in a position to overcome); and the Lord has set rewards, compensations, prizes before these individuals as *an incentive, encouragement* for them to run the present race of the faith in a manner which will allow them to overcome rather than being overcome.
And each of the overcomer’s promises is *millennial*in its scope of fulfillment. That in view through overcoming, or not overcom- ing — as the case may be — will be realized during the 1,000-year Messianic Era alone.
The fact that these are *millennial*in their scope of fulfillment can be illustrated quite easily. Note the promises to two of the seven Churches in Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21. No such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the Millennium.
Christ and His co-heirs, beyond the Millennium, will no longer rule over the nations, as this rule is pictured in Rev. 2:26, 27. Rather, the Gentiles comprising these nations will be brought into positions of rulership themselves with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule ex- tends beyond the earth, out into the universe (Rev. 22:2, 5). And the Son, beyond the Millennium, will no longer sit on His Own throne, as seen in Rev. 3:21. Rather, He will sit on “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” from whence universal rule will emanate (Rev. 22:1, 3, 5).
It is the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Smyrna which has to do with the lake of fire, something which can *only be millennial* within its scope of fulfillment. That is, the conditions alluded to for the nonovercomer in this promise will exist *ONLY for the duration of the Messianic Era, NOT throughout the eternal ages beyond.
Scripture deals ONLY with millennial rewards and/or loss, NEVER with eternal rewards and/or loss.*
This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards. And loss of rewards involves an association with *death* (Rom. 8:13), something which Scripture clearly reveals will be done away with at the beginning of the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (I Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4).
The overcomer’s promise to those Christians comprising the Church in Smyrna reads,

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (2:11; *cf.* Rev. 20:6).

There is a clear implication in this promise that those who do not overcome *will be hurt* of the second death. And any attempt to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it clearly states serves only to destroy the promise, something which the Lord sounded a solemn warning against (Rev. 22:18, 19).

*The promise that those who DO overcome will NOT “be hurt of the second death” would be meaningless unless this promise is taken at face value and allowed to mean EXACTLY what it says, clearly implying that those who do NOT overcome WILL “be hurt of the second death.”*

“The second death” in the Book of Revelation is associated with *the lake of fire* (Rev. 21:8). And those who *do NOT overcome* (v. 7) are going to have their part in this lake of fire (v. 8). That is, *they will be hurt of the second death by having a part in the lake of fire.*

But exactly what is meant by a saved person being hurt of the second death and having a part in the lake of fire in Rev. 21:8?
Revelation chapter twenty-one moves beyond the Millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story concerning conditions as these ages begin.
Note the words, “It is done,” in the first part of verse six. This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indi- cating that the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that finished state.
Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight, overcoming and/or being overcome are again, for the last time, dealt with in this book. And this takes a person back to the same place seen in chapters two and three.
Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses which open and begin this section.
First, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. Revelation 21:9-22:5 forms a commentary for this part of the section (21:1-6a), which has to do with conditions beyond the Millennium. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: “…and they shall reign forever and ever [throughout the endless ages]” (v. 5).
Then, the remainder of chapter twenty-two (vv. 6ff) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with conditions before and during the Millennium (21:6b-8).
And this will explain why, *outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era,*one will be able to find “dogs, and sorcerers, and whore- mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (22:15). This information is given to shed light on and provide additional detail for verses in the preceding chapter (vv. 7, 8), and the information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the previous overcomer’s promises, particularly the one to the Church in Smyrna dealing with “the second death” (2:11).
To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note that those *outside the gates* during the eternal ages will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth (21:24-27); but those *outside the gates* during the preceding Messianic Era, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the nonovercomers (22:14, 15). And the place which they will occupy is described at least four other ways in Scripture — through the use of *Gehenna, the outer darkness, the furnace of fire, and the lake of fire.*
The picture surrounding an association between *Gehenna* and *the lake of fire* appears unmistakable. As *Gehenna* was the place of refuse for the earthly city of Jerusalem, *the lake of fire* is seen as the place of refuse for the heavenly city of Jerusalem. And as *Gehenna* was on the opposite side of the city from that side where God dwelled (*south,* as opposed to *north* [*cf.* Lev. 1:11; Isa. 14:13]), thus will it be with the counterpart to *Gehenna* in the heavenly Jerusalem.
The lake of fire is used with respect to a place completely apart from Christ and His rule. And those “hurt by the second death” are seen occupying this place during the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

(Why does Scripture associate nonovercoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ’s millennial reign, in this manner? The answer would be the same as the reason why Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages of eternity, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire was not prepared for man. Rather, it was prepared “for the Devil and his angels” [Matt. 25:41]. *It was prepared for those who had rejected God’s supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to acquire power and authority above that which had been delegated* [Isa. 14:13, 14].

*Thus, in this respect, the lake of fire is connected with REGALITY.* And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connec- tion with the lake of fire on exactly the same basis. *Saved man,* ignoring the very reason for his salvation [which is *regal*], will find himself

associated with the lake of fire during the Millennium [an association connected with all that the lake of fire implies].

And *unsaved man,* ignoring salvation and the reason for man’s creation [which, again, is *regal*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages following the Millennium [an association connected with all that the lake of fire implies].)

But, relative to Christians and the coming kingdom of Christ, is Scripture dealing with something literal? Or is Scripture dealing with metaphors?

Note how Scripture uses metaphors to deal with this same thing elsewhere.
In John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, where*a burning with fire* is referenced. And the context both places has to do with *either bearing fruit or not bearing fruit*, which is exactly the same thing seen in the Matthew thirteen parables.
Or, as the matter is expressed in Revelation chapters two and three, *either overcoming or being overcome.*
And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast into *Gehenna* (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 23:15, 33) or being cast into *outer darkness* (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
Overcoming or not overcoming and being unhurt or being hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 is expressed a slightly different way in Rom. 8:13:

“For if ye [a reference to ‘brethren’ in v. 12] live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Whether *Gehenna* or*outer darkness* in Matthew, *a burning with fire* in John and Hebrews, *being cast into a furnace or lake of fire* in Matthew and Revelation, or *suffering death or being hurt of the second death* in Romans and Revelation,*different facets of EXACTLY the same thing are in view.*

*ALL of these are used in contexts showing that they have to do with saved people in relation to fruit bearing and the kingdom.*
Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are simply different ways of expressing *the SAME thing.*And since a literal casting into outer darkness, Gehenna, or a furnace or lake of fire could not possibly be in view (for these different places could not possibly be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), it is evident that *metaphors* are being used throughout.
But relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply not expressed other ways in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving no room for any thought other than understanding the matter as*literal,* not metaphorical.
Aside from the preceding, it is clear that *ALL* Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom. This is seen in type in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.
*BOTH* Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture signifies a *kingdom*).
But note *the stark DIFFERENCE in the place which each occupied.**Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always stood (18:22; 19:27).
Lot though found himself in a place separated from the Lord, in a place**where he also had always stood (19:1, 30).*

**The Kingdom**

For the overcomers though — something not really dealt with in the parable of the net, though dealt with in the previous explanation to the parable of the wheat and tares (v. 43) — conditions during the Millennium will be entirely different.

The promise to the overcomers is that *they will NOT be hurt of the second death, they will be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, and they will rule as co-heirs with Christ over the nations*(Rev. 2:11, 26-28; 3:21).

Christ and His co-heirs (who will form His wife, His consort queen) will rule over the redeemed inheritance, and *this rule will last for 1,000 years.* It will last until Christ and His co-heirs have *put down* “all rule and all authority and power.” It will last until *all enemies* (which includes *death*) have been put “under his feet” (I Cor 15:24-28).

It is at this time that Matt. 13:43, referencing and having to do with Christ’s millennial reign, will be fulfilled:
“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

13

Instruction in the Kingdom

***Understanding the Word of the Kingdom***

“Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:52).

The Word of the Kingdom — the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11, 19, 24) — is *the central message of the New Testament.*Whether studying the gospels, the Book of Acts, the epistles, or the Book of Revelation, an individual will be studying Scriptures dealing *centrally with a message pertaining to THE KINGDOM.*

The person understanding this message *will possess a PROPER foundation to build upon as he studies different parts of the New Testament.*
However, if this message *is NOT understood, the converse of the preceding will be true.
That person will possess an IMPROPER foundation to build upon; and his studies throughout any part of the New Testament will, accordingly, be adversely affected.*
This is why an individual instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can be likened to the householder in the text.
Not only will he able to go to the Scriptures and bring forth *things which are “old”* (things he has already seen and understood) but he will also be able, from the things which are “old,” to begin seeing and bringing forth *things which are “new”* as well (things he has not previously seen and understood).
And, according to the text, he will be able to do this *because he has been “instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens.”*
He now possesses *a KEY* to the Scriptures, *a KEY* which will open numerous passages of Scripture to his understanding, passages which otherwise would have remained closed.

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Such an individual, as he studies and learns new things about the Word of the Kingdom, will progressively find himself being able to, more and more, take the “old” and see and understand that which is “new.”

*The latter, in this respect, is inseparably linked to and dependent on the former.
And the MORE that person comes into an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, the MORE he will see Scripture opening up to him in this fashion. THIS is what an understanding of the Word of the kingdom will do for an individual in his quest for a knowledge of Scripture.*
And, though this has been the experience and testimony of numerous Christians, this is not simply what they might have to say about the matter. Rather, *THIS is what the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the matter.*
The Word of God *clearly reveals* that a person instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can go to the Scriptures and bring forth out of this storehouse of unlimited treasures “things new and old.”
But by the same token, apart from an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, though an individual may be able to see and understand certain truths, the same situation referred to in Matt. 13:52 simply doesn’t exist.
The preceding will explain why this whole realm of teaching lies *center stage* in Satan’s attack against the Word during the present dispensation. An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is *the key to a proper understanding of Scripture as it relates to Christians, and Satan knows this.*He knows that if he can corrupt or destroy that which will open the door to a proper understanding of the numerous other Scriptures bearing on the subject, he can best accomplish the purpose for his present work among Christians.
Satan’s efforts toward this end are something easily seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. These four parables present a chronology of Satan’s work as he seeks to subvert the Word of the Kingdom, and this chronology covers the progressive results of his work in this respect throughout the entire dispensation.
Satan’s attack in the first parable, *the parable of the Sower* (vv. 3-8, 18-23), was seen to be against *those hearing the Word of the Kingdom.* He sought to stop the matter at that point, preventing individuals from understanding this message and subsequently bringing forth fruit.
Four types of individuals are seen responding to the message, with Satan being successful in his attack against three of the four.
Those seen in the first three of the four categories fell away and bore no fruit. But Satan’s attack against those in the fourth category proved to be unsuccessful. They heard the Word, received and understood the Word, overcame Satan’s attack, and bore fruit.
Then the next parable, *the parable of the wheat and tares* (vv. 24-30, 36-43), *centers around Satan’s attack against the ones bearing fruit from the previous parable.* Satan placed those with a false message (false teachers) in the midst of those bearing fruit, seeking to subvert the message and stop that which was occurring. That is to say, *he sought to corrupt the true message through introducing a false message*.
And this was done with a view to *stopping* that which had resulted from a proclamation of the true message. This was done with a view to *stopping* those Christians who were bearing fruit from doing so.
Then the next parable, *the parable of the mustard seed* (vv. 31, 32), shows *that which happened in Christendom over the course of time during the dispensation because of this false message.*
The mustard seed germinated and took a natural growth for awhile. But then something happened, which caused it to take an unnatural growth and eventually become *a tree.* And after this unnatural growth had occurred — after the mustard bush had became a tree, something which it wasn’t supposed to become at all — *the birds of the air (ministers of Satan, seen in the first parable [v. 4]) found a lodging place therein.*
And the fourth parable, *the parable of the leaven* (v. 33), *completes the picture.* The false message introduced near the beginning of the dispensation is likened to leaven placed in three measures of meal (“three” is the number of *Divine perfection,*and “meal” is that which is used to make *bread.*Leaven [a corrupting substance] was placed in the meal [resulting in corruption in the bread]).
And this leaven would continue to work (this false message would continue to permeate and corrupt the true message) until *the whole* had been leavened (until *the whole* had been corrupted).
This is *the revealed direction* which Christendom would take relative to the true message concerning the Word of the Kingdom following the introduction of the leaven, following the introduction of a false message concerning the Word of the Kingdom.
These four parables together show *a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom.*
This message — *the central message of the New Testament* — was universally taught throughout the Churches during the first century. But the introduction of a false message resulted in changes. *Christendom itself took an unnatural growth; and this unnatural growth was such that the false teachers eventually found themselves welcomed within that which they, through their false message, had corrupted.
Corruption though DIDN’T stop at this point. The working of the leaven continued, and it would continue until this false message had permeated ALL of Christendom. This corrupting process would continue, according to the text, “till the WHOLE” had been leavened.*
And, viewing the matter *SOLELY* from the standpoint of that which can be seen in the world today, *what has been the end result of the working of the leaven? As the dispensation draws to a close, where does the Church find itself today?*
The answers are easy to ascertain. All one has to do in order to see and understand that which has happened is to go into almost any Church of the land (fundamental and liberal alike) and listen for any mention of things having to do with the Word of the Kingdom.
*A person will listen in vain.* Because of the working of a leavening process which is in its final stages, *the true Biblical message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom is practically nonexistent throughout Christendom today.*
This leavening process *recognizes NO bounds or barriers.* Fundamental Christendom finds itself just as permeated with the leaven, relating to the Word of the Kingdom, as does liberal Christendom. From the theology schools to the pulpits of Churches to the pews in these Churches, *the WHOLE of Christendom finds itself in exactly the same state insofar as that revealed throughout the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen is concerned.*
Many of the fundamentalists, *not understanding the true nature of the leavening process, look upon themselves as having escaped this corruption.
BUT, such is NOT the case at all.* Insofar as any understanding and proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom is concerned, the fundamental groups find themselves *in EXACTLY the SAME state as the liberal groups. They find themselves permeated through and through with exactly the same corrupting leaven.* There is absolutely *NO difference*between the two groups in this respect. Neither understands nor proclaims this message.
Seminaries — fundamental and liberal alike — are training students *in everything BUT the one message which will open the Scriptures to their understanding.*
And these same seminaries are turning out graduates who are filling the pulpits of Churches with a message completely void of any reference to the Word of the Kingdom. These seminary graduates don’t know the truth of the matter, and, as a result, *their entire ministries* are negatively affected. The various flocks which the Lord has entrusted to their care are not being properly fed; and, in reality, for the most part, *Christians under their ministries are slowly starving to death.*
Christians throughout the Churches today *are simply NOT hearing the one message, above all other messages, which they should be hearing.*
And the reason is given in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen. The working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time has produced*a corruption extending throughout Christendom which has all but destroyed the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.*
And, as a result of this corruption, the Bible, for the most part, *remains a closed book for the vast majority of Christians.*
The preceding is why a person, untrained in the theology schools of the land, but understanding the Word of the Kingdom, often has *a better grasp of the whole of Scripture* than many of those who are trained by or even teaching in the theology schools.
*The person having an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom possesses a KEY to Scripture which a person without this understanding does NOT possess. He can go to the Scriptures and bring forth things both “new and old”; but the same thing CANNOT be said for those who lack this understanding.*

**Why?**

*WHY* will instruction in the Word of the Kingdom open the Scriptures to a person’s understanding like nothing else? *WHY* is an understanding of this message so vital if a person is to possess a correct and proper grasp of Scripture?

The answer could be looked upon in a twofold respect. *First,* an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is *the ONLY thing which will provide the TRUE Biblical picture surrounding the PURPOSE for the Christian life.*

*WHY* did God bring *the new creation* “in Christ” into existence? *WHY* is God taking an entire dispensation to do a work among the Gentiles? *WHY* is the Holy Spirit presently in the world performing *a work among Christians?*

And *second,* an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is *the ONLY thing which will provide the true Biblical picture surrounding direction for the Christian life.*

*WHAT* is the goal toward which everything moves as it pertains to *the new creation*“in Christ”? *WHAT* is the spiritual warfare about? *WHAT* is the race of the faith about? *WHAT* will be the end result of victory or defeat as it pertains to the warfare or the race?

An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom will answer questions surrounding the Christian life*unlike anything else in the Word of God.*
This is *the ONLY thing* which will present the complete Biblical picture in its correct fashion. *ONLY out of this teaching* can all the issues surrounding the Christian life be properly addressed, and *ONLY out of this teaching*can one find the true motivation for Godly Christian living.
*BUT*, if all the preceding is true — and it is — then *WHY* is this message so fought against in Christian circles today? It would appear that *acceptance* rather than *rejection* would be the norm.
Such though is *NOT* the case at all. Rather, with rare exceptions, *rejection* is invariably the norm. And the reason is seen in the working of the leaven in Matt. 13:33.
*The negative attitude of Christians toward the Word of the Kingdom is simply the END RESULT of a work of Satan which has been going on for almost 2,000 years.*

*1) Purpose of…*

The overall picture of the Word of the Kingdom in the New Testament begins with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in the gospel accounts.

Israel spurned this offer, the offer was taken from Israel, and an entirely new entity was then brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11).

*The one new man, the new creation*“in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15) was brought into existence to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed.
And, since Israel had spurned the offer, God, in relation to this *one new man,* turned to the Gentiles. God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would perform and complete a work with *an entirely new creation.*And this would be accomplished through removing “a people for his name” from among the Gentiles, though with “a remnant according to the election of grace [believing Jews]” being included (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:5).
And, in order to carry out His purposes surrounding this *new creation,* God sent the Holy Spirit into the world. Throughout the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world performing a work in the antitype of that seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.
As Abraham in this chapter sent his servant into the far country *to procure a bride for his son,* God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world *to procure a bride for His Son.* And, as in the type, so in the antitype — the search occurs *among those in the family.* The Spirit of God is conducting His search *among those comprising the one new man,* for this *one new man*forms the body of Christ, and the bride is to be taken *from the body* (*cf.* Gen. 2:21-25; 24:2-4, 9; Matt. 22:14).
And also as in the type, once the search has been completed, the bride will be removed. As Rebekah was removed from Mesopotamia, so will Christ’s bride be removed from the earth; as Isaac came forth to meet Rebekah, so will the Son come forth to meet His bride; and as Rebekah went with Isaac to his home, where *she became his wife,* so will the bride go with Christ to His home, where *she will become His wife* (Gen. 24:61-67; I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 19:7-9).

*2) Direction for…*

The goal toward which everything pertaining to *the new creation* “in Christ” moves is *EXACTLY* the same as the goal set forth in the beginning, in the opening two chapters of Genesis. The point out ahead *toward which ALL things move is the earth’s coming Sabbath, foreshadowed by the Sabbath in Gen. 2:1-3, which followed six days of restorative work (Gen. 1:2b-25).*

And it matters not whether one is viewing the reason for the existence of the one new man, the reason for the present dispensation, or the reason for the Spirit of God having been sent into the world, *the point toward which EVERYTHING moves is ALWAYS the same. It has to be the same, for this is the way matters were set forth and established at the beginning of God’s revelation to man (Gen. 1:1-2:3).*

And properly understanding the spiritual warfare and the present race of the faith is contingent on properly understanding things surrounding *the GOAL which lies out ahead.* It is contingent on properly understanding *the REASON God has brought the one new man* into existence, *the REASON God has set aside an entire dispensation to deal with this new man,* and *the REASON God has sent His Spirit into the world to perform a work during the dispensation.*

Christians are engaged in *a warfare against powerful spirit beings in the heavens*, *which is part and parcel with the race of the faith in which they find themselves engaged*; and whether Christians do or do not understand all the various things about this warfare and race, Satan knows every one of these things all too well. And he is ever lying in wait to defeat the Christian in the warfare or sidetrack him in the race.

And the end result will be either *victory or defeat.* An individual will either *overcome* in the warfare and race or he will *be overcome.*
And note what is at stake in either victory or defeat —*the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man.* The Spirit of God is presently in the world opening the Word of God to the Christians’ understanding, calling their attention to one central fact:

*Christians are being offered positions as co-regents with Christ in His kingdom, forming the bride which will reign with the Son as consort queen.*

*THAT’S what is at stake.*
And knowing this, is it any wonder that Satan, very early in the dispensation, set about to accomplish the things outlined in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen? Is it any wonder that he has done and continues to do everything within his power to corrupt and destroy the true message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom?

**From Genesis to Matthew to Revelation** As previously seen in this book, several things must be kept in mind when studying the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

The first four were given outside the house, by the seaside; and the last three were given after Christ had reentered the house. This fact, often overlooked, is significant beyond degree if one is to understand these parables correctly.

Then, a chronology is seen in the parables which carries the reader from the beginning of the present dispensation to the future Messianic Kingdom.

As previously shown, the first four parables (given outside the house, by the seaside) present a history of Christendom as it relates to the Word of the Kingdom; and this history covers the entirety of the dispensation.

Thus, to understand *WHY* conditions in Christendom are as they presently exist, *one has to go back in history and follow the course of events leading into the presently existing situation.*

And going back in history after this fashion *can ONLY be done ONE WAY. It can ONLY involve going to the Scriptures to see what the Word of God reveals about the matter*, not what the various Church history books written by man reveal.

All of man’s writings on Church history might as well be categorized as “secular” insofar as this aspect of Church history is concerned. That which man has written simply doesn’t deal with Church history in this respect, *though this is the main crux of the matter seen within the way Scripture deals with the subject.*

The earliest period of Church history is dealt with in the Book of Acts, following the inception of the Church. This period covers that time when the kingdom was being re-offered to Israel (from 33 to about 62 A.D.). And, accordingly, the message seen throughout this book centers around *the proffered kingdom.*

The epistles (some written during the Acts period, some following) deal centrally with the same message seen in Acts — *one having to do with the kingdom.* These epistles simply form *different facets of instructions written to Christians surrounding the same central message.*

And these epistles, as the Book of Acts, provide information surrounding early Church history.
Both the Book of Acts and the epistles deal with the Church during the first century only. But there are two places in Scripture which deal with a history of the Church throughout the dispensation.
One is in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, before the Church was even brought into existence; and the other is in Revelation chapters two and three, at a place in the book where the Church is seen being dealt with at the judgment seat in the heavens following the dispensation (though the record itself was given during the early years of the dispensation and has to do with a history of the Church during the dispensation as well).
Thus, one complete history is seen in Scripture at a point *preceding*the dispensation (Matt. 13), and the other is seen in Scripture at a point *following*the dispensation (Rev. 2, 3).
In Matthew chapter thirteen, before the dispensation began, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the first four parables.
And, in Revelation chapters two and three, at a point in the book which follows the dispensation, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the seven letters (seven epistles) to the seven Churches.
The first presents a history of the Church *in relation to the Word of the Kingdom* from the perspective of the Lord using parables; the second presents a history of the Church *in relation to the Word of the Kingdom* from the perspective of the Lord using epistles to seven existing Churches in Asia.
*But both show EXACTLY the same thing.* The Church is revealed to have begun one way (a mustard bush, an entity laboring for Christ’s sake [Matt. 13:32; Rev. 2:2, 3]), but the Church is seen ending another way (a tree, a completely leavened entity, one neither cold nor hot, one described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” [Matt. 13:32, 33; Rev. 3:15-17]).
Then, all of this is intimately connected with God’s original structure of His Word at the beginning. The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three are structured after a fashion which is in complete keeping with the way God set matters forth at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in the opening chapters of Genesis.
And this is easy to understand, for the latter rests upon and is inseparably linked to the former.

Scripture begins with *a foundational framework upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests* — six days of restorative work (a restoration of the ruined material creation, with man created at the conclusion of this work, on the sixth day), followed by a seventh day of rest, a Sabbath day. And the preceding relates the story of the whole of Scripture beyond this introductory framework.

Man, following his creation, fell. And he, through this fall, became a ruined creation, bringing about not only his own ruin but the ruin of the restored material creation once again as well. And God, following this ruin, again set about to perform six days of restorative work — which this time had to do with both man and the material creation. And this latter restorative work will be followed by a seventh day of rest — a Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God, the coming Messianic Era (Heb. 4:4-9) — in exact keeping with the pattern set forth at the beginning.

Each day in the former restoration was twenty-four hours in length, including the Sabbath; and each day in the latter restoration has been/will be 1,000 years in length, including the Sabbath (*cf.* Matt. 16:28-17:5; II Peter 1:16-18; 3:1-8).

All of Scripture beyond the foundational framework in the opening two chapters of Genesis rests upon and forms additional information for this framework. And it matters not whether one is dealing with the framework set forth at the beginning or with subsequent Scripture, all restorative work can be seen moving toward *the SAME goal — a coming Sabbath of rest.*

(Note also that exactly *the SAME septenary structure* beginning the Old Testament in the opening two chapters of Genesis is seen in the opening two chapters of John’s gospel as well [which, in this respect, should be the gospel beginning the New Testament, paralleling Genesis beginning the Old].

As well, with respect to everything moving toward the seventh day, the subject matter is the same throughout both books. In Genesis, this is accomplished mainly through the use of *types;* and in John, this is accomplished mainly through the use of *signs.*

The former [Genesis] has to do with the restoration of a ruined material creation, occurring over six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following]; the latter [John’s gospel] has to do with

the restoration of another ruined creation, ruined man, occurring over six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following].

Thus, if John’s gospel occupied its proper place in the Canon of Scripture — set at the beginning of the four gospels — each Testament would be introduced by this septenary structure.)

Then, with the preceding in mind, note the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Events in these parables form one facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath, which covers the entire present dispensation.

And, viewing events in the remaining three parables, which move beyond the present dispensation and progress on into the Messianic Era, it’s easy to see and understand how all these parables move toward this same goal — the same goal set forth at the beginning of Scripture, the coming Sabbath.

*EVERYTHING moves toward this goal.*
And exactly the same thing can be seen in the seven epistles to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three. This sequence of epistles simply forms another facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath.
And, from the overcomer’s promises, along with that which is revealed in Revelation chapters one and four, it’s easy to see and understand that all of this (exactly as the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen) has to do with the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom and the coming Sabbath.
*Again, EVERYTHING moves toward this goal.*
Thus, it should be a simple matter to see that *ANYTHING in the New Testament which has to do with the Church centers around things having to do with the coming kingdom.
And though man may write his history books completely separate from this message, Scripture CENTERS its revealed history of the Church COMPLETELY around this message.*
During the first century, Christians would have understood a history of the Church in keeping with Scripture, for the Word of the Kingdom was universally taught throughout the Churches of the land.
Today though, the situation has become completely reversed. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that two things would be evident:

*First,* a Church historian wouldn’t know enough about the Word of the Kingdom to even include it within his account in the first place, much less ascribe a central place to this message in his account.

S *econd,* even should a Church historian write about the matter, Christians wouldn’t be able to understand that which he was writing about. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the truth about the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that it would be completely alien to their way of thinking.

And that’s where we are in a supposedly enlightened twentieth century Christendom, immediately preceding Christ’s return for the Church.

We’re living during a time when *there is far more material available for Bible study and research than has ever existed in the history of the Church — everything from the extensive computer study and research programs to new books being printed every day.*

But we are also living during a time when *the birds of the air are freely lodging in the branches of the tree, with its roots sunk deep into the earth, where the leaven is completing its final work.*

**Warning**

The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen deal *FAR more extensively with the negative than they do with the positive.*
More space is given in the first parable to those who fail to bring forth fruit than is given to those who do bring forth fruit (in three of the four parts). And the emphasis in the second, third, fourth, and seventh parables is on different facets of this same work of Satan as well.
Only the fifth and sixth parables, which have to do with Christ’s redemptive work as it relates to the earth and to His bride, form an exception.
Thus, the central thrust of these parables is seen to be *FAR more negative than positive.*
These parables have to do centrally with exposing the work of Satan throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, along with revealing where this will lead, both during and following the dispensation.
As the dispensation draws to a close and Satan’s corrupting work nears its final stage, the whole matter goes almost completely unrecognized in Christendom. And the reason for this is easy to see and understand. The leavened state of Christendom is being viewed by those who have themselves been adversely affected by the leaven.
They are, in this respect, as the two disciples on the Emmaus road who were walking alongside the resurrected Christ and didn’t even recognize Him. Their inability to recognize the Christ of the Old Testament Scriptures — the Word which had become flesh, the Old Testament Scriptures which had been manifested in a Person — resulted from their inability to properly understand these same Scriptures. It was only after these Scriptures had been opened to their understanding, followed by Christ breaking bread, that their eyes were opened.
And Christians today, viewing a leavened Christendom and not seeing or understanding its true condition, are simply not viewing matters from a correct Biblical perspective. Their inability to recognize the true condition of the Church stems from their inability to understand that which Scripture reveals about the matter. And, if their eyes are to be opened to the truth of the existing situation, such will occur only through the truth of the Word being presented to them and being accepted by them.
But will such occur during the present dispensation? Will the truth about the coming kingdom ever be proclaimed in such a manner that it will be accepted, allowing the eyes of Christians to be opened?
One here and one there will hear and understand the message, *but NOT the Church at large.*
Conditions can *ONLY continue to deteriorate*in the latter respect. Such was assured, the pattern was set, when the woman placed leaven in the three measures of meal.
*And conditions can ONLY continue to deteriorate, until the WHOLE has been leavened.*

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