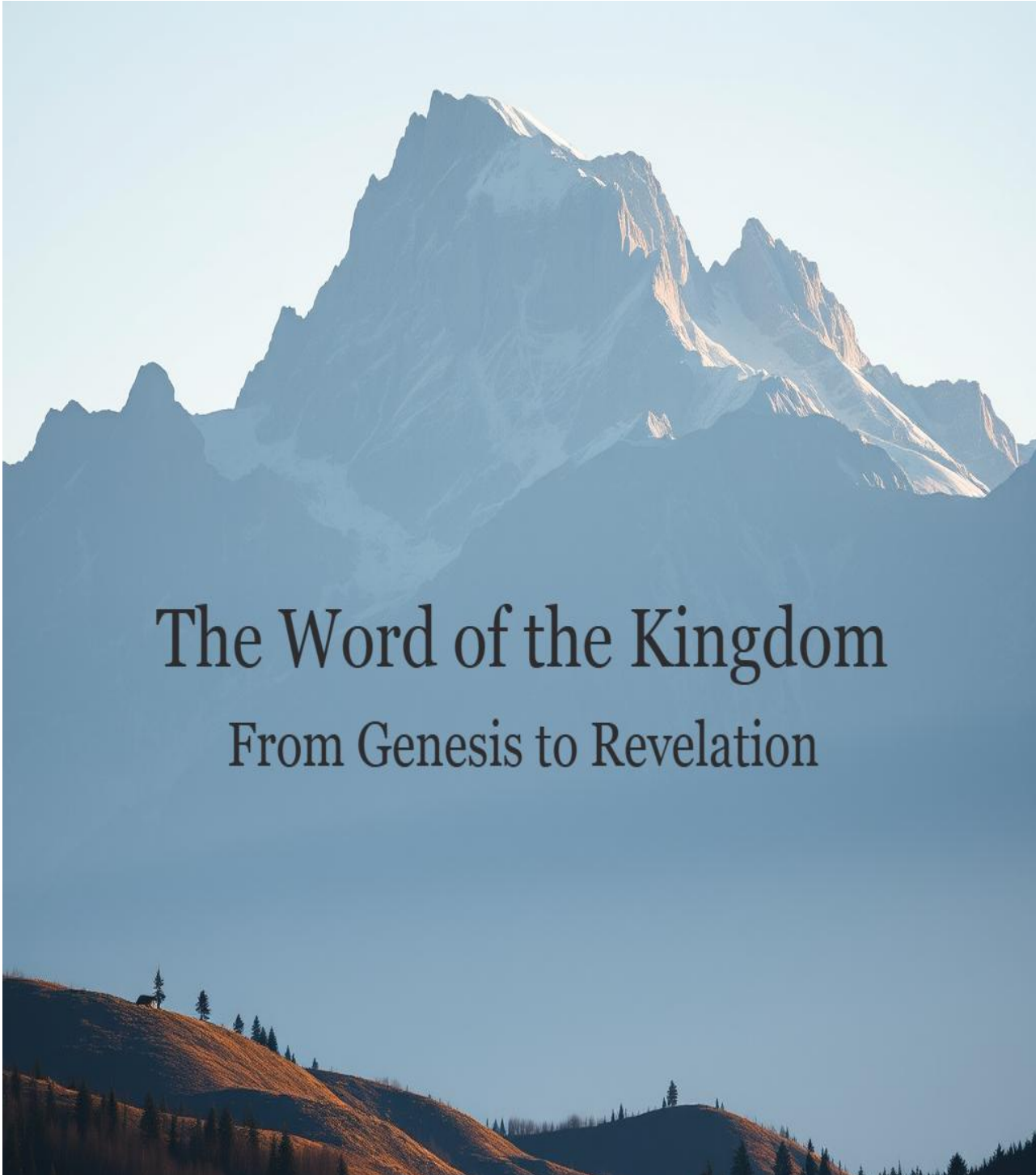




# The Word of the Kingdom

## From Genesis to Revelation

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The phrase “the word of the kingdom,” found in Matthew 13:19, also called “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23, 9:35, 24:14, Mark 1:14-15), is at the heart of the Christian faith; yet, today it is rarely given much thought let alone accurately taught. Jesus says specifically in Matthew 6:33 to “seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” so one would think understanding *exactly* what “the kingdom of God” is would be a Christian’s top priority in order for them to seek after it. But is it? If you ask a dozen Christians from differing denominations what “the kingdom of God” is you’ll get a plethora of differing answers: “the kingdom of God is when we let God rule in our hearts,” “the kingdom is God’s church in the world right now,” “the kingdom of God is Christ’s future rule on earth,” “I don’t focus too much on the kingdom,” “there is no literal kingdom”... and it goes on and on. In some instances even the word “kingdom” can trigger a *negative* reaction, shutting down all conversations about it immediately.

The truth is that the phrase “the word of the kingdom” encapsulates the *central message* taught in the Scriptures, and therefore should be *the central message* proclaimed and taught to Christians today. It is not a message of *conversion* in order to become a Christian; it is the message **for Christians** in order to mature and become strong in the faith.<sup>1</sup> This is why we need to *clearly* understand what it means.

There are numerous reasons why “the word of the kingdom” is hard to find in our church assemblies today. First and foremost, Scripture itself teaches that is the way it will be (not that *it should* be this way, but that *it will* be this way; we cover this later in this study). Another reason for its absence is that most Christians, in particular those raised in Western cultures, come to the Scriptures with pre-determined notions that have arisen from cultural upbringing, native

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<sup>1</sup> If you’re asking yourself what it takes to *become* a Christian (what some call “saved” or “born again”), let’s stop right here and address this **very simple** concept which has gotten completely distorted within the numerous denominations of Christianity. Simply put, Jesus died in mankind’s stead; He paid the price *for every single person*. So what does that mean? It means every person is born dead (which just means “separated from God”) & in a sinful state (Eph. 2:1-3, Rom. 5:12) and Jesus physically died (took our sins on Himself) to free us from that death. Romans 6:23 tells us that “the wages of sin is death,” so everyone born in that sinful state “owes” a death. Jesus’ death pays that debt that we owe; He is the Substitutionary Sacrifice. And all a person has to do to be saved by grace (saved from death & have fellowship with God) is to *believe*, that is *have faith* in the Provision God has given us – His Son, Jesus the Christ (“faith” and “belief” are the exact same words in Greek and Hebrew, just translated differently in English). It is summed up most succinctly in Acts 16:30-31, “...and after he brought them out, he [the Philippian jailer] said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.’”

Do you believe that Jesus died for you? Do you believe that Jesus paid the price for you on that cross at Calvary? Do you accept this Provision on your behalf? *Then you have been saved, by God’s grace, through your faith/belief.* And that’s it. You now have life and fellowship with God. And we can know for certain that this *free gift* (Rom. 5:15-19) can never be lost, given back, or taken back by God because “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29). We will address this in more detail as we go along.

But that is only *the first step*. After this simple step we are then expected to grow up and become closer to the God Who saved us, learning more about Him - and His expectations of us - as we let Him transform us into the image of His Son. And that is what this study is about.

language influences, and/or just plain erroneous teaching, resulting in completely misunderstanding biblical concepts and word definitions. And lastly, sermons and Bible studies tend to be watered down commentaries relying mostly on using man's words and traditions, rather than deep-dives into the Scriptures to explore more deeply *God's words* (in particular the original languages of the Bible, bypassing translation issues). This unfortunately results in many Christians lacking the know-how – or the motivation– to study the Bible on their own and grow thereby. It's become the habit of many Christians to simply take someone's word for what the Word says, not double-checking and learning the Scriptures for themselves. Doing so is an intimidating and seemingly overwhelming task; not only does it take time and effort, it can be difficult to even know where to begin.

However, God tells us in the beginning pages of Scripture this is how it will be—“by the **sweat of your face** you shall *eat bread*” (Gen. 3:19), “the *bread* of life” being Jesus Himself (John 6:32-58), the Word made flesh (John 1:14). And Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who **diligently** seek Him.” Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” And Isaiah 28:9-10, “[To] whom will He teach knowledge? And [to] whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk; those just drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”

We must *mine* for the treasure God has buried in His Word.

Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that “All Scripture is *inspired* by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” The Greek word for “inspired” is ‘theopneustos’ which literally means “God-breathed.” And in both Hebrew and Greek the words for “spirit” and “breath” are *the same word*; therefore, “All Scripture is God's breath” and “All Scripture is God's Spirit.” To rephrase this very important passage: “ALL Scripture (the entire Bible) is profitable (“beneficial”) for the man of God (the Christian), giving him/her everything he needs for his walk of faith: teaching (“doctrine”), reproof (“evidence”), correction (“straightening up”), and training in righteousness (“education which includes chastisement”) IN ORDER FOR HIM/HER TO BE perfectly equipped for every good work.”

Jesus Himself says to His disciples who were lacking in their understanding of the events concerning His death and resurrection, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning *Himself*” (Luke 24:25-27). Which part of the Bible did Moses write? The first 5 books of the Old Testament. And which part of the Bible is written by “the prophets”? The rest of the Old Testament, from Joshua to Malachi. Jesus used all the Scriptures

to teach about Himself, so we too must search all the Scriptures to learn the things concerning Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

The Scriptures—*God’s very words*— also tell us, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7) and “when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” (John 16:13). God *desires* each one of us to understand the Word He has given us and to mature in the faith; He has given each one of us everything we need to do so, so it is simply our own choice whether or not we want to avail ourselves of His provisions.

We must *mine* for the treasure God has buried in His Word – His entire Word.

The biggest challenge in studying and understanding the “God-breathed” Word is properly *pulling out* of the Scriptures that which was initially *written into* the Scriptures; this is called *exegesis*, which means “to draw out.” In contrast to exegesis is *eisegesis* (“to draw in”), which is the act of putting your own thoughts and ideas into the words you’re reading. And this seems to be the way many Christians come at the Bible, i.e. *what does this particular verse mean to me right now?* While figuring out how to apply Scripture to one’s own life is absolutely necessary, the first steps should always be to set proper *context*. Each verse is set within a slightly bigger context (like a chapter or two), and each chapter is set within a book’s context. Ultimately though, each book is set within the Big Book, which tells a *singular story*; it has a central theme, setting (place and time), protagonist and antagonist.<sup>3</sup> There is a *macro* view of Scripture, that which covers Genesis to Revelation, and there are many *micro* views, concepts developed and revealed progressively but still set within the one macro view.

Therefore it takes time, patience and *discipline*—and a lot of prayer!—to grow in your knowledge and understanding of God’s complete Word. Diligent study requires reading the Word often (daily if possible since it is *spiritual food*), engaging with Bible tools such as search software, lexicons, an inter-linear, grammatical aids, concordances, etc. Above all else, we need to remember that the Supreme Author, the Holy Spirit-God Himself, moved those men of old to pen the words as they did (2 Pet. 1:21), both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. And since we know God is not “the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33), concepts in both testaments will not contradict; if we perceive that they do, then we are in error somewhere, **not** the Scriptures.

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<sup>2</sup> The “Scriptures” of Jesus’ day were all the same writings (books) that we currently have in what we call the “Old Testament.” After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Gospels and letters that make up our “New Testament” were written during the 4 decades that followed (all written before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD). The New Testament is simply an *unveiling* of the Old Testament, with the Spirit of God *revealing truths* buried in the Old Testament *to men through the lens* of the death and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah. Therefore, there is nothing in the New Testament that is not in the Old Testament; both Old and New speak in harmony regarding the Christ and His past, present, and future work. All of Scripture is about God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> The beginning 3 chapters of the Bible introduce us to God (‘Elohim,’ a Hebrew word showing us the singularity AND plurality of God—Father, Son, Spirit), man—male and female, and the serpent (who is the devil/Satan) and their perpetual struggle against each other. The last 3 chapters of the Bible give us the resolution to this struggle, wherein God is victorious, as is man because of God, and the devil is defeated.

It also helps to understand that the original Scriptures were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek; the English translations we have today are just that – man’s translations of one language into another. During this process many words have gotten mistranslated and many times the definitions of the words (such as we find in a lexicon) reflect these misinterpretations. In other words, the translations and definitions in the Bible tools we use *are not God-breathed and thereby are not infallible*. That is why it is so important to view the Scriptures both *as a whole* and *within context*, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13, Is. 28:9-10). God, in His perfection, brought all the individual books and letters together into one Big Book in a specific order; therefore, spiritual concepts *must remain constant* throughout. This is why we *must* put aside what we *think* we know and rely solely on the Scriptures, **no matter how challenging that may be.**<sup>4</sup>

What follows is a trek through the Scriptures to create a coherent and cohesive picture of the “word of the kingdom”—*using Scripture to interpret itself*— and to help understand more fully what it means to seek the kingdom first, above all else. This is also an attempt to tackle—in small “building block” bites—essential theological concepts that have gotten mired in confusion within the church today, giving you a better biblical foundation on which to build your faith. This study is for Christians<sup>5</sup> who desire to learn more about God’s Word, His awesome promises, and *our purpose*. This study is for those with a seeking heart and a humble spirit. I include many, many Scripture references and I earnestly ask that you stop and read **each one** as they’re provided. I also incorporate footnotes profusely—as parenthetical thoughts, to give more details on a topic or word, or as slight offshoots of thought concerning the word or sentence they’re referencing. Please read **each one** as you come across them and study the verses accordingly. Please note

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<sup>4</sup> Not only are the original 66 books of the Bible penned by Jewish men (Romans 3:1-2) moved by the Spirit of God, i.e. “God-breathed,” but the order of the books is God-ordained as well. God has given *His revelation of Himself to man* in this form and we need to be diligent in studying it *in the way He gave it*. He starts at the beginning, Genesis, and ends in Revelation, and so must we. This is why it is so difficult for Christians to fully understand the Person and Work of Jesus Christ if they only read the New Testament. And why so many struggle with the Book of Revelation; it’s the climax and conclusion of the 66-book story we call the Bible. They must all be understood as a cohesive whole.

If you want to more fully understand why we can trust the authenticity of the Bible in its current form today, we cover it in the section in the Appendix called “Apologetics.”

<sup>5</sup> So far I’ve been using the term “Christian” to mean someone who has believed that Jesus died for their sins and they are “saved.” Even though Scripture only uses the word “Christian” three times (Acts 11:26, 26:28, and 1 Pet. 4:16), it uses it more narrowly as to mean someone who is saved and a disciple of Christ (Acts 11:26). I take a bit of liberty here at the beginning by using the word as it means in our current vernacular; but, as much as is possible, we must always try to use Scriptural terms *accurately* and *precisely*. Therefore, as we move on I will instead begin using the phrase “members of the church” or “the church” in place of the word “Christian” when I am referring to “saved” individuals post-Cross, since this more accurately *scripturally* means “the body of Christ,” those who have believed on Jesus and are “saved.” (See Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Eph. 2:11-18, 3:6, 4:4-6, 5:23-30, and Col. 1:18.)

The word “church” is very often misused today to mean the *building or structure* where Christians/fellow members of the body of Christ go to meet, e.g. “We go to church on Sundays.” This is not what the word “church” means. The Greek word for “church” is the noun ‘ekklesia,’ which literally means “the called out” (‘ek’ = *out* or *from* + ‘kaleo’ = *to call*), meaning an *assembly* or *congregation*. Biblical context is always a called out group of people. In the New Testament after Christ’s first advent, it is referencing the members of the body of Christ (See Matt. 16:18, 18:17, Acts 2:47, Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 1:2, 12:27-28, to name a few). In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint, created around 280-250 BC) the word ‘ekklesia’ is used most often for the nation of Israel when they are assembled together (Deut. 9:10, Judges 20:2, 1 Kings 8:14, to name of few).

that the Scripture references listed aren't exhaustive by any means, but are provided to give you ample places to read about and learn more concerning the information given.<sup>6</sup>

Have your Bibles open and pencils in hand, and pray unceasingly that God would open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to hear and understand His truth. My words mean nothing; only the Holy Spirit and God's Word are able to give you wisdom and understanding AND an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119 in its entirety, John 6:63-68, 1 Cor. 2:12-13, Prov. 2:6, 2 Pet. 1:2-11).

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<sup>6</sup> Some help in deciphering how to read brackets and parentheses within quotation marks: When you see a Scripture passage word for word (in the indented parts), it's a direct quote from either the NASB or the NKJV, even though it is not surrounded with quotation marks. When I insert words in a Bible quote in brackets [like this], that indicates that what I've inserted are my words, and not part of the quote. Brackets are used to indicate changes or additions to the original quote, but are never used to alter the meaning of the quote. Any time you see parentheses inside a quote (like this), they are part of the quote. When you see words or phrases underlined in a quote, *I've added it*, not the author of the quote, and I use it for emphasis. When you see letters in **bold** in the quoted portions of Scripture I use, I've added it for emphasis. Lastly, when you see italics in a quote of Scripture (I don't transfer them here, but your Bible does have it from time to time) it indicates that the word or phrase in italics is not in the original language manuscripts from which the English has been translated. A quick lesson on quotation marks as well: Quotation marks appear at the beginning and end of a direct quote, "like this" (although like I said I'm not using it for the blocks of Scripture I use in the indented parts). When *the quote* is quoting something, the quote *within a quote* uses inverted commas, 'like this.' And on the rare occasion there is a quote within a quote within a quote, the innermost quote utilizes the first quotation marks again, "like this."

## **PART I — SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY: LIFE AND DEATH**

One of the foundational teachings of Scripture concerning *man's inward being* is erroneously taught throughout Christendom today, causing mass confusion when it comes to “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:13).<sup>7</sup> Man is a *triune* being; he is comprised of **three** parts: spirit, soul, and body. He is not simply a body with a soul, as many believe, nor only body and spirit. Let's look at how clearly Scripture makes this point.

Starting at the very beginning of Scripture, God says this just prior to the creation of man –

Genesis 1:26

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

Man is created after the image and likeness of God. He is *patterned after God*, and God speaks of Himself here in the *plural* form, “*Our image...Our likeness.*” The Hebrew word used here for God is ‘Elohiym,’ which literally means *two or more* gods. (It is no small matter that God chose to mention this about Himself in the direct context of man's creation.) The Scriptures clearly teach that there are not two or more *separate* Gods, but One God consisting of *three* separate parts; this is what we think of as the Trinity—

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

John 1:1-3, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 Corinthians 8:6

...yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things...

John 10:30

(Jesus speaking) "I and the Father are one."

John 17:22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one..."

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<sup>7</sup> When I use the word “man” in a general sense, it's meant as Scripture uses it—to reference human beings in general, both male and female.

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

John 4:24

God is Spirit...

And elsewhere we read a very clear, concise verse by Paul to the church at Thessalonica where he uses **three distinctly different words** when describing his desire to see each individual person be "completely sanctified" and "preserved blameless" at Jesus' return—

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit [Greek word 'pneuma'] and soul [Greek word 'psuche'] and body [Greek word 'soma'] be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Spirit, soul, and body.* And another similar, specific distinction is mentioned in the Book of Hebrews—

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul ['psuche'] and spirit ['pneuma'], and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The word of God pierces and divides *soul* and *spirit* (two separate yet interconnected things), in the same manner as *joints* from *marrow* (two separate yet interconnected things). Soul and spirit both have to do with the inward man, the invisible parts of man, as this division by the word of God concerns the discerning of the *thoughts and intents of the heart*.

As we practice learning knowledge and gaining understanding "precept upon precept, here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:9-10), let's see how Scripture presents the details of Jesus' death on the cross —

Luke 23:46

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit ['pneuma']." Having said this, He breathed His last.

Acts 2:22-31

[Peter speaking] "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul ['psuche'] in Hades [many times translated erroneously as "hell"], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul ['psuche'] was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

Luke 23:52-53

This man went to Pilate and asked for the body ['soma'] of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.

Jesus was not only *fully God* but He was also *fully man*. Luke records that Jesus commits His *spirit* into the hands of the Father just before He breathes His last breath. In the Book of Acts Peter speaks to the people of Israel concerning this man Jesus whom they crucified, and verse 22 shows us that Peter is clearly speaking about Jesus of Nazareth. In speaking of Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter uses David's own words from Psalm 16 (recorded nearly 1,000 years prior) in order to show the people that the patriarch David was *not talking about himself* but about the Christ when he wrote the psalm.<sup>8</sup> Peter was trying to convince the nation of Israel that their Messiah *did* come and the man Jesus was indeed the One they had been waiting for. Peter says that David *prophesied* that God's Holy One, the Christ – the Promised Descendant of David Who would sit on David's throne forever (the Son of David AND the Son of God, 2 Sam. 7:12-16)—WOULD DIE, but **He would not be held by death**. His soul would not be left in Hades; His soul would GO to Hades, but not LEFT in Hades. The Christ, the Promised One, would be resurrected.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The word 'Christ' is from a Greek word ('christos') meaning "anointed"; in Hebrew the word for "anointed" is 'mashiyach,' translated in English as "Messiah." Jesus being the Christ (the Messiah) simply means that He is The Anointed One that the nation of Israel was waiting for. Upon seeing the phrase "Jesus the Anointed One," we should be asking ourselves, "Anointed to do what?" This study will answer that question.

<sup>9</sup> The Greek word 'Hades' – and its counterpart in the Hebrew 'Sheol' – are often translated into English as "hell." This is incredibly misleading and confusing. Hades and Sheol are used many ways, most often to denote "the grave," conveying the thought that the person who is mentioned as going there is *physically dead*, i.e. they no longer are alive in bodily form on the earth. These words have nothing to do with "forever and ever torment" for the "unsaved" (which is the popular, but erroneous, definition of "hell"). Hades and Sheol are always used in connection with one's "soul" going there upon death, as differentiated from one's "spirit." We will continue to expound on this distinction between soul and spirit as we move along in the study.

Adding to the confusion, the translators have taken the Greek word 'Gehenna' and translated it as "hell" also. 'Gehenna' is not "hell"; Gehenna is the Greek word for the Hebrew place called "The Valley of Hinnom" (we talk more about this later in the study). They've also translated the Greek word 'Tartarus' as "hell," too, which is even more misleading. Ironically, the phrase "the lake of fire," which is most similar to our modern concept of "hell," is never translated as "hell." These distinctions are important to note, though we won't be going in-depth on the topic in this study.

And lastly we see in Luke's account that Jesus's body was put into a tomb.

After Jesus' death, **but prior to His resurrection**, His *spirit* went to the Father, His *soul* went into Hades, and His *body* went into the tomb. That makes the man Jesus a *three-part being*, consisting of the same three parts mentioned by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Now let's add more to the picture by briefly exploring the concepts of *life* and *death* (in the manner of "line upon line, here a little, there a little") as we refine our understanding of their definitions, specifically how Scripture presents it.

In a purely physical, secular sense, the words *life* and *death* are simple enough to understand: if one has *life*, he or she is breathing, their heart is pumping blood throughout their body, and their brain is active; if one does not have *life* then that person is *dead* – they are not breathing, the heart is not pumping blood through their body, and the brain is not active. Life in the secular sense simply means a person physically exists on this earth; *death* means they no longer do.

Most Christians/members of the church would agree with that explanation of life and death, yet they further believe that there is indeed some sort of life after death pertaining to the inner man (spirit/soul). Most of the church today can offer an explanation concerning this life after death, but often it comes across as a somewhat nebulous union between man and God in Heaven, a relationship that stretches throughout eternity.

The Scriptures present these antonymous words (life vs. death) in a much more complex way, yet in a very *clear* way. The world's simple view we just defined is indeed seen in God's Word (the impact on the physical body as we know it), but God moves beyond this simple view to express the terms life and death in a **spiritual and soulical** sense as well (that which impacts the *inward* parts of man).<sup>10</sup> The intricacies of this concept can only be understood if you first understand the triune nature of man – spirit, soul, and body.

In Genesis 1:2–2:3 we read about God creating *life*; that is, He created living creatures. First He created the animals in the waters and the birds in the sky. He then created the animals on the earth. In the sixth day God created man (and woman, details given in Gen. 2:7-25) in order to rule over all the earth. He then pronounced all that He had made as being "very good" (Gen. 1:31). There is, however, a difference between the creation of the animals and the creation of man. First, the animals—

Genesis 1:20

Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living [Hebrew word 'chay']

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<sup>10</sup> Scripture also teaches about the bodily resurrection—a *physical resurrection*—in the last days, which awaits everyone who physically dies (what Scripture most often calls "falling asleep") during this present age. The resurrection of the body and the "redemption of the body" are two different things (1 Cor. 15:13-15, Rom. 8:16-25, Philp. 3:10-11, 2 Tim. 2:18, Heb. 11:35, Rev. 20:5-6). We will address this as we go along.

creatures [Hebrew word 'nephesh'], and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.”

Genesis 1:21

So God created great sea creatures, and every living ['chay'] thing ['nephesh'] that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:24

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living ['chay'] creature ['nephesh'] according to its kind: cattle and creeping things and beast of the earth, each according to their kind”; and it was so.

Genesis 1:30

Also, to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life ['chay' 'nephesh'], I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so.

And then man—

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [Hebrew word 'nashamah'] of life ['chay']; and man became a living being ['chay' 'nephesh'].

The Hebrew word for “living” (adjective) and “life” (noun) is 'chay.' In the preceding passages from Genesis we see the word 'chay' used in conjunction with the word 'nephesh' in all accounts. When 'chay' and 'naphash'/'nephesh' are used together, they indicate a living, breathing, *physically alive* creature/being.

The animals/creatures are described as simply 'chay nephesh,' “living beings” when they are created. But with the creation of man, we see something additional. God breathes into man's nostrils the 'nashamah' of life, which means the “breath” of life (can also be translated as “spirit of life”). It is only after man receives this “breath/spirit of life” that he becomes a “living being.”

Notably, the Hebrew word 'nephesh' is also the word translated as *soul* throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. This is similar in the case of the Greek word 'psuche'; it is translated as both “life” and “soul” interchangeably (Matt. 16:24-26 is one such example).

In the creation account of both man and the animals, *soul* is mentioned in connection with the life of the *physical being*, the physical body. There is a reason for this and further on in Scripture God tells us specifically the relationship between the soul and the body (called “flesh” in many cases) –

Leviticus 17:11a

11 For the life ['nephesh'] of the flesh is in the blood...

We can also translate this as—

**“For the soul of the flesh is in the blood...”**

The word “flesh” is used in a dual manner in Scripture. Many times, including in the preceding verse, the word “flesh” is referencing the physical, organic body which all animals and all men have when they are born into this world. Other times the word “flesh” is used to reference the *sin nature* of man, that which is associated with our first birth (the “old man” that still exists after we become initially “saved,” Rom. 6:6, Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9). Context would dictate which is being referred to (though one can see how intricately connected they are: the earthly physical *flesh* is always going to have a *fleshly* sin nature connected to this world as long as the curse remains). This particular verse explains to us a most important concept concerning the relationship between the soul and the body – *the soul/life of the physical earthly body is found in the blood*. Since all physical bodies of flesh have blood running through them, all bodies of flesh have a soul and the soul is the “life,” or animating force, of the body. *Because of this relationship* the soul and the body are inextricably linked. (This is an important concept, so please make sure you grasp it.)

With the creation of man we saw that God *breathed* life into him. God gave him the “breath of life” which caused man to become a *living being*. The animals were also called *living* [creatures] yet they did not have the breath of God. Clearly, “the breath of life” which emanates from God Himself indicates something other than the animation of the organic body. The Scriptures plainly teach that when it comes to *mankind*, he/she must have the breath of God, *in addition to* the soul and the body, in order to be a “living being.”

This brings us back to the triune nature of man. The animals were created soul and body, but man was created soul and body *and* spirit/breath.<sup>11</sup> Again we see that man is a three-part being – spirit, soul, and body.

So man was **alive**, all three parts, in the beginning when he was created. Man was a perfect creation without sin. An important question to ask at this point is, “Was man *immortal* when he was created?” Some think that the tree of *life* was present in the Garden for the purpose of imparting immortality (tree of “life” needed to sustain *physical life* of the body) to man, but can that be true? If the tree of life was in the Garden for that purpose, then we would need to presuppose that man, in his perfectly created state, was created with the capacity of physical, organic death. But that cannot be true, and the following passages will help explain why –

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<sup>11</sup> Remember, the English words “breath” and “spirit” are interchangeable, translated from the same word, ‘nashamah’ (as well as ‘ruwach’) in Hebrew and ‘pneuma’ in Greek.

Genesis 2:15-17

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"

This is a clear command from the Lord about what Adam and the woman could and could not do. God gave an expressed consequence for disobedience—*death*. We later get commentary on this event and why the consequence was given –

Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death...

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...

God's command to Adam gave a clear recompense: if you sin (disobey), you will die. The converse would be true as well: *if you do not sin, you will not die*. So before Adam and the woman partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby sinned, they *could not*, in their perfect state, *experience death, any type of death, either physically or spiritually or soulically*. They had not sinned; therefore, death had not entered the world.

But shortly after their creation, the man and the woman both disobeyed God, they *sinned* –

Genesis 3:6

So the woman saw that the tree [of the knowledge of good and evil] was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Because Adam and the woman disobeyed God, they died *the very day that they sinned* (Gen. 2:17). But they didn't physically keel over and stop breathing *that day*. So, then, *what is death*? And how did it affect Adam and the woman? Let's read further –

Genesis 3:7

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Adam and the woman's bodies were still alive; they still possessed physical, natural life. Obviously death as a wage of sin does not mean *immediately ceasing to physically exist*. To find out what it does mean, let's keep reading –

Genesis 3:8-10

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are

you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Immediately after Adam and the woman partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *on that very same day*, we see a separation between man and God. God called to Adam and said, "Where are you?" Obviously God is omniscient and knew where Adam and the woman were; the meaning and subtext here is that *God cannot see them*. And with man hiding himself from God for fear of being seen "naked," <sup>12</sup> we can understand this as simply a *picture* of separation between man and God. Death is the consequence of sin, and sin cannot be looked upon by God for He is holy; therefore, God separates the sinful man from Himself. This separation is what is meant by the word *death*.

This death sentence that was given to Adam and the woman had far reaching ramifications, for it was not only they who received the consequence –

Romans 5:12, 14

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Ephesians 2:1-2

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

We can notice something very interesting when Adam's son Seth is born –

Genesis 5:1-3

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. 3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Seth is born in *Adam's image and likeness*. Because of the initial transgression of the woman and Adam, death entered into the world and was passed on to everyone born of a man and a woman from then on (save One, Jesus, the One born to a *virgin*—the sin nature passes through *the man*). Therefore every person born to a man and a woman is born *dead*, separated from God. So how did death really affect man? Was it just their bodies, now destined to "return to the ground from which [they] came" (Gen. 3:19)? Was it their soul that died, since it is the life force of the body?

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<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the word for "naked" in Gen. 2:25, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" is not the same word for "naked" in Gen. 3:10, "I was afraid because I was naked." The former is the Hebrew word 'arwm,' which means "partially naked"; the latter is 'eyrom,' which means "completely naked."

Or was it their spirit, which connects man to God, setting him apart from the beasts of the field? The details of this verse we studied earlier sheds more light on the subject –

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you [literally “make you holy”] completely; and may your whole [literally “entire”] spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Greek word for “completely” is ‘holoteles’ which comes from the words ‘holos’ and ‘telos.’ ‘Holos’ means “whole” or “all” and ‘telos’ means “end.” Additionally, the sentence structure of this verse is written in such a way in the Greek that the word “whole” should actually appear before each of man’s parts listed: spirit, soul, and body. Therefore this verse is more literally written as –

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself make your whole being holy at the end; and may your entire spirit, your entire soul, and your entire body be preserved complete and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is saying that everyone needs to be *wholly and entirely* sanctified – ALL THREE PARTS: spirit, soul and body. Man is currently *not holy, not sanctified* because all three parts of man were affected by death. So even though when we are born into this world we are alive *in the physical sense*, our spirit *and* soul *and* body are considered *dead, separated from God*. More accurately, the spirit is “dead,” the soul is “corrupted,” and not only does the body begin to decay, but it lacks a significant attribute necessary to be reunited with God, in His likeness and image—*glory*.<sup>13</sup>

Simply put, “death” is separation from God; “life” (which is the opposite of “death”) is fellowship and togetherness with God. And since death affects all three parts of man, all three parts of man must be dealt with in respect to life. Therefore, when Scripture talks about *life* and *death*, you must take careful note as to which part of man is being referred to and whether it is clearly speaking in a *physical* sense, a *bodily* sense, a *soulical* sense, or a *spiritual* sense.

On the heels of this we should take a look at the word “salvation” and its iterations of verb tenses. This is a vast subject to unpack, so we’ll spend just a little time on it for now and continue to discuss it as we move through the study. Within the mindset of Christianity today, the words *salvation* and/or *saved* generally have one single connotation – deliverance from an eternity in hell. There are varying thoughts on the subject of salvation within this limited view, such as whether or not a person is *actually* saved if they claim to be, and whether or not a Christian can lose their salvation once they’ve received it. But just as the words *life* and *death* show us, the scriptural definition of salvation is not to be understood so narrowly.

Suffice it to say, there is very little taught in the definition itself of the word *salvation/save*; it simply means to be freed, rescued, or delivered *from* something. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial

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<sup>13</sup> We will cover this topic in more detail as we go along in the study.

to define the word by its context. When we come across the word, we need to ask, "CONTEXTUALLY, *what* is this person/people saved *from*, and *when*? (And most significantly, "How is he/she saved?") In an overall sense man needs to be *saved* (delivered, rescued, freed) from death; i.e. his position of *being separated from God*. Ever since Adam sinned man is born into this world *dead* (death being the wages of sin) and he/she *must* receive life pertaining to all of the three parts of his being.

In Scripture, the word *salvation*, when used as a verb, is seen in *three tenses*: **past, present, and future**. (The Greek language actually has 5 tenses, with 3 of those 5 for past action, but we won't be looking deeply at that here.) In the New Testament we read "by grace you have been saved [past tense]" (Eph. 2:8), "...God, who has saved us [past tense] and called us with a holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9), "but to us who are being saved [present tense]" the message of the cross "is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18), and "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved [future tense] from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9). Also in Scripture we see man looking to be "saved **from** his enemies" (Num. 10:9, 2 Sam. 22:4, Ps. 18:3, Luke 1:71), "saved **from** [God's] wrath" (Psalm 138:7, Rom. 5:9, 1 Thess. 2:16, 5:9), wanting "deliverance" **from** evil (Matt. 6:13, Gal. 1:4, 2 Tim. 4:18), "deliverance" **from** this body of death (Rom. 7:24), deliverance **from** "the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer. 51:45), saved **from** a "crooked generation" (Acts 2:40) and we could go on and on, as there are a plethora of places in Scripture this is found. Clearly, the theological concept of "salvation" is complex. We will continue to build up this foundation as we move along.

However, the source of salvation is NOT complex. Acts 4:10-12, "...let it be known to you all [leaders of Israel], and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." And as if it couldn't be any clearer, the name "Jesus" in Greek literally means "Jehovah saves."

## **PART II — RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTIFICATION**

We have covered the idea that *life*, as it pertains to the three parts of man, means fellowship/togetherness with God, and *death*, as it pertains to the three parts of man, means separation from God. Everyone is born completely separated from God and therefore everyone needs to be *completely* reconciled back to God (given life)—all three parts. This concept is more fully understood through an accurate understanding of the words *righteousness* and *justification* (and their variations).

The Hebrew word for the noun “righteousness” is ‘tsedhaqah,’ which is a legal term that describes relationships, wherein the parties involved must be faithful to the expectations of one another. This word implies rightness, justice, and fairness.

The Greek word for the noun “righteousness” is ‘dikaiosune,’ which literally means “to conform to what is right or that which is just.” The root word ‘dike’ **carries with it the thought of judgment**; it expresses the idea of an expected behavior or conformity *according to an imposed standard*, with a prescribed punishment for nonconformity. The root word ‘dike,’ in its noun form, is only used four times in the New Testament, where it is translated as “judgment,” “vengeance” (twice), and “punishment” (Acts 25:15; Acts 28:4; Jude 1:7; and 2 Thess. 1:9).

“Justification” is another word used in Scripture that is very similar to the word “righteousness.” It is the Greek noun ‘dikaiosis,’ with the same root word ‘dike,’ which means the act of establishing a person as righteous or just.

The Greek word for the verb “justify” is ‘dikaioo,’ which means to either bring out the fact that a person is righteous or, if he is not righteous, *to make him righteous*. This word does not necessarily refer to *how* he is made just/righteous. It also has the same root word ‘dike,’ as above. The identical idea is conveyed in the Old Testament with the Hebrew verb “justify,” which is the primitive word ‘tsadaq,’ the root of the word for “righteousness.”

The ideas conveyed with the words “righteousness” and “justification” (and their variations) are *relational* in their scope. One who does not meet the standards of another needs *justification* – to be made *righteous/just* – in order to conform to the other’s standard of *right*. If the one *does not* conform to meet the standards of the other, that person will incur a judgment or punishment based on their nonconformity. In the specific case of the relationship between man and God we can clearly see who needs to meet the standards of Whom. Man needs to be justified – made righteous – in order to meet God’s standards, since man is sinful and God is perfect (obviously God does not need to meet man’s standard). And if man does not meet God’s standard of right, *man incurs a judgment*.

So now let’s take a brief look at righteousness from God’s perspective –

Psalms 34:15-16

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalms 1:6

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalms 11:4-7

The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 5 The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. 6 Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. 7 For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

In each of these verses we see the contrasting of *opposites*: the righteous vs. those who do evil, the righteous vs. the ungodly, and the righteous vs. the wicked. The righteous ones are heard by God, He knows their “way,” He loves righteousness, and He beholds the upright. Conversely, the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, He will cut off their remembrance from the earth, the ungodly will perish, and His soul **hates** the wicked.<sup>14</sup> Seems pretty clear that righteousness is of utmost importance to God.

God is perfect and He is righteous. Anything short of perfection God does not accept; He only accepts that which is holy, for He is holy. Therefore, man must conform to God’s standard of *right*. If man does not, God’s face is against him and He will not accept him. That is where the judgment comes in: acceptance or denial by God, based on *His* standards.

Mankind is born separated from God, *dead* in sin and trespasses, and therefore in need of justification (*to be made righteous*). Being made righteous is the same thing as being given *life* (and the same as being *saved from death*), for it brings one out of a place of death/separation into a place of life/togetherness; it brings one out of a place of non-conformity into a place of conformity. And as we will see, justification must affect all three parts of man.

Having seen the *need* for justification, let’s now address the *means* of justification (in its simplest sense). Clearly, man can IN NO WAY do *anything* solely by his own hand or on his own terms that would earn him the righteousness needed in God’s sight. God, *and only God*, is capable of producing holiness, imparting righteousness, and imparting life. In order for this to occur, God must first deal with the sin that separates man from Him.

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<sup>14</sup> You may find yourself automatically thinking that the “righteous” are the “saved,” and the “evil,” “ungodly,” and “wicked” are the “unsaved.” Keep in mind that *being righteous* means to meet God’s standards. A question for you to think about: since a Christian still sins even after they are “saved,” then they’re not meeting God’s standard while in that temporary sinful state, are they? Would God be able to look upon them? Would He still see them as “righteous” while in that state? This study will challenge you to think about these things *scripturally*.

So let's see how God does it. The following verses are just a few of the many places we can find commentary –

Hebrews 9:22

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission [literally, “forgiveness” or “deliverance”].

2 Corinthians 5:18-19, 21

Now all these things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses against them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 5:10a

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...

1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

We can see clearly from these few verses that in order for man to be brought back into a position of favor/holiness/righteousness with God, it MUST be through Jesus Christ (Who is wholly God) and His blood that He shed for that very reason. For Israel in the Old Testament, God reconciled them through the death and shed blood of the Passover lambs (which only had its efficacy because it embodied what had not taken place in their timeline yet, but had indeed already occurred, Rev. 13:8 “...of the Lamb [Jesus] slain from the foundation of the world.”). But now, from the events of the cross onward, God reconciles man (forgives, takes away sin, justifies, saves, is given life) through the death and shed blood of His Son (who is The Passover Lamb, God Himself), Who died on the cross *on our behalf* so that we could individually receive – through His blood – the removal of the sentence of death that was given us because of the sinful nature we received from Adam (which we were born into). Through Jesus Christ we are given the life needed in order to be in God's presence. If we did not have that bridge, there would be no way to fellowship with God. We would still be dead, separated forever from our Creator.

The finished work of Christ on the cross at Calvary is just that – *finished*. However, the results of that finished act are still playing out in time and space for you and me. Jesus' sacrifice makes life possible for *all people*. Yet, an individual's reception of that life is still a choice to be made *by that person*. Each and every person ever born (save One) has been born *dead in trespasses and sins* and therefore must make a conscious choice to believe in and receive the provision that God has given for *life*.

Now we must remember that death has affected all three parts of man and therefore *life must also affect all three parts of man*. But justification (being made *righteous*, being *saved* from death) of all three parts is not simultaneous. I'll repeat that – justification of all three parts of man is not simultaneous. Exercising faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross is only the beginning

point of our complete justification (our complete “salvation,” our complete “sanctification”). This initial justification affects our spirit, wherein we are made *spiritually alive*, and are no longer spiritually dead. For example, think about the state of our body after we receive initial justification through faith in Jesus’ death. Clearly *our body* is still on a course of death; it does not instantaneously become impervious to fatal injuries or sickness. Also, remember that the soul is inextricably linked to the body – the soul/life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11).<sup>15</sup> So as long as we are physically alive on this earth in this “body of death” (Rom. 7:24), with which we were born into this world, *we are not yet completely justified*. Again, *complete justification* of our whole person (spirit, soul, **and** body) *is yet future*.<sup>16</sup> Note the time frame mentioned in the following verse –

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify [literally, “make holy”] you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So we can see that all three parts—spirit, soul, and body—will need to be made complete, blameless, *sanctified* (justified) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, a **future** event.

Let’s now take a look at another facet of *the process of* justification in order to get a better understanding. As we learned concerning the definition of the word “justification,” implicit in its meaning is the idea of a judgment being passed at the moment the righteousness is imparted, thereby rectifying the inequality that existed between the two parties. Let’s look at the following verses and make some necessary connections –

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...

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<sup>15</sup> The spirit is made alive upon initial justification/salvation, but the soul remains *corrupted*. This is obvious in that once we are initially “saved” we still retain our sin nature, our “old man,” the part of us that acts “fleshly,” not always doing the desires of our Father but the desires of ourselves. This is as in Genesis 1:2-4 when there is only darkness, then God *speaks* (the Spirit moves) and light appears. Then God *separates* the light from the darkness; He does not remove the darkness (see also 1 John 1:5-10). For a more thorough elaboration, read Romans chapters 5 through 8, Eph. 4:17-24, and Col. 3:5-11.

<sup>16</sup> The **salvation of the soul** is a *future justification*, to be determined at our *future judgment* (at the Judgment Seat of Christ). It is “the goal [literally “end”] of our faith spoken of in 1 Pet. 1:9 and Heb. 10:39. It is that “so great salvation” in Heb. 2:3, a salvation that was revealed in these last times *for us*, that which angels longed to look into and prophets longed to see (1 Pet. 1:10-12). As James 1:21 says *to the church*, “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to **save your souls**,” and Matthew writes “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life/soul will lose it, but whoever loses his life/soul for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul/life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul/life? **For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works**.’” (Matt. 16:24-27).

Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death...

We have already covered these two verses, but let's remember what they teach us. Because of the *sin* that entered into the world through Adam, *death* entered the world. The reason death entered the world, and subsequently was and still is passed on to all of mankind, is because *the wages of sin is death*. And the word "wages" means *a payment, a requirement*. So **the payment for sin is death**. Then we see this recorded by Paul –

1 Corinthians 15:3

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

So Christ died on our behalf because *God requires a death for sin*. But how is it that God accepts the death of Jesus as a substitute for our own death? Because "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7). This would make little or no sense to us unless we understood the original Passover and the implication such a term would mean concerning Jesus' death. Let's explore that first Passover in more detail and see what that can teach us in relation to Christ's role on our behalf.

The first Passover took place while God's chosen people – the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – were enslaved in Egypt. While in Egypt, the Hebrew people were treated harshly and they cried out to God to deliver them from their cruel taskmasters. God sent them Moses to deliver His people out of bondage in order to bring them into the land that was promised to their forefathers. To effect this deliverance, God said to Moses –

Exodus 4:22-23

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "**Israel is My son, My firstborn**. 23 So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, **your firstborn**.'"

God later told Moses to say this to the Hebrew people –

Exodus 6:6-8

"Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and **I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments**. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.'"

God said He would deliver the sons of Israel from bondage with "great judgments" (which can be read about in Exodus 7-10). These judgments had an impact on Pharaoh and the people of Egypt, but it was the tenth and final judgment, *the death of the first-born*, that finally brought about the release of the Hebrew people. The events of this tenth judgment are recorded like this –

Exodus 11:4-5

Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt 5 and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals.'"

The fact that the descendants of Abraham, as a whole, were God's first-born son (Ex. 4:22) would have made the sentence of death applicable to *every single individual*, and not just applicable to their literal first-born sons. And because God had plans for the people of Israel, He provided them a way of escape from this judgment –

Exodus 12:3, 5-7, 12-13

"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household... 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it... 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'"

God saw the blood, determined that a death had already taken place in the households of Israel, and He passed over the first-born. We can see that *God accepts the death of a substitutionary sacrifice (that He has provided, see Gen. 22:1-8 for additional commentary) on the behalf of those under the sentence of death*. God still passes judgment, but allows another to receive that judgment; in this case, male lambs without blemish. Paul gives us more detail on this very thing in his letter to the church at Rome –

Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation (literally "atonement") by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

And because all have sinned, the *righteousness of God* is manifested through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe (verses 21 and 23). This gift of justification, given by grace, is accomplished through "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This word "redemption" in verse

24 is the Greek word ‘apolutrosis,’ which means “a ransom” or “price paid on our behalf.” Knowing this, let’s reword the previous verses:

A person receives the righteousness of God *not under the law anymore* (as the Jews did before Christ’s death and resurrection), but by **believing** in Jesus Christ (to this the Law and the Prophets witnessed). This applies to anyone who believes, for there is no difference because everyone has sinned and falls short of the glory of God. God *freely justifies* us (“makes us righteous” and “gives us life”) by His grace THROUGH the ransom – literally “the price paid on our behalf” – of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ blood *is set forth by God* to atone for our sins so that when we believe in Jesus, *He will pass over our sins that were previously committed in order to justify us*. THIS IS OUR INITIAL SALVATION (of the spirit).

I sure hope you see and understand the depths of this!

Let’s recap what we’ve learned so far....

When we are first born into this world, we are born “dead.” We are *dead* in that all three parts of us are *separated from God* because of sin –the sin passed down from Adam through the procreation of mankind. God requires the death of *an unblemished male lamb* in judgment of this sin. In the same way the nation of Israel was saved out of bondage in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lambs, we are saved out of bondage to sin (the bondage we were born into) by the blood of THE Passover Lamb. Jesus Christ is that substitutionary death for us. And once we appropriate His blood (believe in Him, the provision that God has given [Acts 16:30-31]), God passes over us as He sees the blood of Jesus Himself, signifying that a death has taken place. And, in judgment, a death *has* taken place. God accepts Jesus’ death in substitution for our death. God passes over our sins previously committed in our spiritually dead state. Therefore, because of Jesus’ death, and our faith <sup>17</sup> concerning His death, our past sins up to that point of faith – *all of them* – are forgiven because they have been paid for. *And they are remembered no more!*

Jesus Christ died on the cross, spilling the blood of God Himself, to pay the penalty of death for our sin. He paid the penalty of death, gave His life as a ransom, in order to bring us out of death and make us righteous. Within this realm of *initial* justification, life is imparted to our spirit and we are justified; we are *saved*. We are spiritually born; we become a “living being.” Judgment – in relation to our spirit being made righteous – is passed right then and there at the moment of belief.

And because a judgment is passed, this life – **the life of our spirit** – continues on *forever unto all the ages*. It will never be taken back and can never be *given* back. If you continue reading about the experience of the nation of Israel subsequent to their redemption from Egypt you would see that they were *never allowed to go back to Egypt*, though they cried out for it so many, many

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<sup>17</sup> In both Hebrew and Greek the words for the verbs “believe” and “have faith in” (nouns “belief” and “faith”) are *the same word*: ‘emuwn’/’aman’ (same root) in Hebrew and ‘pistis’ in Greek. This is extremely important to keep in mind when studying Scripture.

times. They could not go back into bondage because judgment had already passed. It was, and is, a done deal!

*But this is just one part of our three parts.* After this initial salvation **we know that we still sin.** That's because our soul is still corrupted, still in darkness. Therefore life, justification, and salvation (and *judgment*) must occur in relation to our soul as well. We will continue to study this as we move along, but having these foundational concepts in place regarding life, death, righteousness, justification, and salvation will make it much easier to see that which the Lord teaches us in His Word.

Let's now move on to the next part of this study as we seek to understand this message/word of the kingdom in more detail.

### **PART III — THE MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM**

The word “kingdom” appears 54 times in just the Gospel of Matthew alone, and another 96 times in the rest of the New Testament—150 mentions overall. There’s the “word of the kingdom,” the “gospel of the kingdom” (the Greek word for “gospel” is ‘euaggelion’ which literally means “good message”), the “mystery/mysteries of the kingdom,” the “keys of the kingdom,” the “heirs of the kingdom,” being “considered worthy of the kingdom,” and “inherit[ing] the kingdom,” to name just a few.

First and foremost, the word “kingdom” and its numerous phrasings in Scripture is NEVER a reference to salvation by grace through faith, our *initial salvation* (as presented in verses such as Acts 16:30-31 and Eph. 2:8-9, that which impacts our spirit). This will continue to be borne out in this study.

The phrase “the word of the kingdom” is used only once in Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew, in an explanation Jesus gives to His disciples concerning a parable He had just spoken—

Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23

That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. 2 And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. 3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; 4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. 8 And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

18 [Jesus speaking] "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 20 The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

This parable and its explanation are also recorded in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and because it is recorded elsewhere we are able to see, by encompassing all three accounts, the full panorama of details. For our purposes here we'll be focusing solely on beginning to define the phrase, “the word of the kingdom,” and not what each facet of the parable teaches us (though we will be studying this parable a bit more in-depth later on).

In Matthew 13:18-19 Jesus says “the word of the kingdom” is the seed from His parable of the sower, that which the sower sows. This seed, this word of the kingdom, is *heard* and it is sown into the hearts of individuals (v.19). And of those who hear it, there are four varying results. Mark records the same parable but uses a different phrase to represent the seed that is sown—

Mark 4:14-20

[Jesus speaking] "The sower sows **the word**. 15 These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. 16 And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky place, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; 17 and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction of persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. 18 And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, 19 and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

In Mark's account the seed is simply called “the word” when explaining what the sower sows, but when talking about the four varying situations of those on whom it is sown, both Mark and Matthew say “those who *hear* the word.” Let's compare them with Luke's version—

Luke 8:11-15

[Jesus speaking] "Now the parable is this: the seed is **the word of God**. 12 Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

Here in Luke the seed is the “word of God,” but yet just as the other accounts he simplifies it to “hearing *the word*” when telling of the four different results it yields. So we clearly have “word of the kingdom,” “word,” and “word of God” used interchangeably; therefore, they are all referencing the same thing. And notice that all three versions say that this “word” is *heard*—so we know it is a *spoken* message.

So let's now put in context this first parable recorded in Matthew, *when* it is told, and *why* it was told.

Jesus begins to speak in parables *for a reason*, and He tells us why. Read Matthew Chapter 12 and you'll see several events transpire between Jesus and the religious leaders—the scribes and

Pharisees—on a Sabbath day.<sup>18</sup> First, Jesus and His disciples become hungry while in the grain fields, so they pick the heads of grain and eat them. The leaders chastise Him for it, saying He broke the law of the Sabbath. Next, on that same Sabbath day, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand in a synagogue, right after the leaders try to trick Him in order to accuse Him. We then read that *the leaders plot to destroy Him for it* (Matt. 12:14). Lastly, on this same Sabbath day, Jesus heals a demon-possessed man (Matt. 12:22), which causes the crowd who witnessed it to ask the question whether this Jesus was indeed the promised Son of David (Matt. 12:23). At this point the leaders *publicly* speak against what Jesus has just done, attributing the casting out of the demon to the work of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons (Matt. 12:24, see also Mark 4:22, Luke 12:10). This then *casts doubt* in the minds of the querying multitude.

Here is the One born King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2)—God Himself (John 10:30)—in the midst of His own people offering healing and forgiveness of sins, and the leaders tell Him, *and all of those in earshot who were just wondering whether this was indeed their promised Messiah*, that Jesus was doing it by the power of the ruler of the demons.<sup>19</sup> Jesus then tells the leaders that what they have done – what He calls “blasphemy against the Spirit” – will not be forgiven them, either in this age or in the age to come (Matt. 13:32, also Mark 3:28-29). This is a turning point.

And then *right after this* the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus for *another sign* (hypocritically inferring that if given just one more sign they’ll believe Jesus is who He says He is). Jesus responds by calling them “an evil and adulterous generation [for craving] a sign” (Matt. 12:39) and says “no sign shall be given to [this generation] but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:39-40, also Luke 11:29-30). Jesus is now making reference to His death for the first time; *Israel’s rejection of Him* and His crucifixion are now coming into view.

On that same Sabbath day Jesus leaves the house, sits by the sea, and with His disciples with Him He speaks to a multitude of people gathered around Him (Matt. 13:1-2).<sup>20</sup> *He then begins to speak*

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<sup>18</sup> Stop and read Matthew chapter 12 before going on. You should know the details of what transpires, as I only skim over them.

<sup>19</sup> Beelzebul in Greek is ‘Beelzebul’, and in Hebrew is ‘Ba’al Zabub,’ which context states is “the god of Ekron” (1 Kings 1:2-3, 6, 16). Based solely on the word itself, it’s hard to distinguish much except it literally means “dung god.” However, context in the New Testament seems to suggest this is either Satan himself or a being in high command, close to Satan. We can see this in Matthew 12:24-27, “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, ‘This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.’ And knowing their thoughts He said to them, ‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.’”

<sup>20</sup> A disciple is to be differentiated from “the multitude.” The original 12 disciples are those first 12 men who left everything behind and followed Jesus, whom they called *Rabbi, Teacher, Master, and Lord*. They believed Him to be the Son of God, their Promised Messiah, and were determined to go wherever He would lead. Later on many more people became “disciples,” wholly following Jesus the Christ. The *multitudes*, however, wanted to hear Jesus speak and many followed Him here and there for a short while, but the level of commitment and belief was entirely different. This distinction will become clearer once we talk about maturity and understanding “the mysteries of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:11) later in the study.

*in parables for the first time.* This sequence of events is very important to understand, so let's summarize them again: Jesus defies the Jewish laws of the Sabbath three times, the religious leaders plot to destroy Him, and then these same religious leaders publicly accuse Him of being one with the devil, negatively swaying the multitude as they do so. Jesus says they have crossed a line and cannot be forgiven of it in this age or the age to come, then they taunt Him some more. Jesus again rebukes them and makes direct mention of His coming death (as well as that generation's degeneration into wickedness, Matt. 13:41-45). **He then speaks in parables for the first time.**

Following the telling of the first parable, Jesus' *disciples* ask Him why He has begun to speak in parables –

Matthew 13:11-17

He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given **to you** [the disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven [literally "the kingdom of the heavens"] but **to them** [Israel's leaders and the multitude surrounding Him] it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

Jesus speaking in parables has to do with knowing or not knowing "the mysteries of *the* kingdom of the heavens" (it is *very important* to remember and use this phrase as it was written in the original Greek). Mark and Luke use the phrase, "the mysteries of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10, Mark 4:11), which, because of context, would mean *the same thing* as the kingdom of the heavens. And knowing these mysteries of the kingdom was being granted to His *disciples*, but not to the scribes and Pharisees or the multitude (v. 11). Jesus further says that He speaks to them in parables because "while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (v. 13).

Of course Jesus would connect His parables to knowing the mysteries *of the kingdom* since **the primary focus** of His earthly ministry (and John the Baptist's, His forerunner) was concerning the kingdom—

Matthew 3:1-2

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent for the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand."

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand."

Mark 1:14-15

And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Luke 4:43

But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."

Matthew 4:23

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel [literally "good news"] of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 5:3, 10

[Jesus speaking] "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]."

Matthew 6:33

[Jesus speaking] "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

John 3:1-5

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 and this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do, unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 And Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

So the seed that was sown by the sower in Jesus' first parable is the message that was given by Jesus Himself concerning the kingdom which was at hand. This is the *good news* He brought, the *gospel* that He preached. The "word of the kingdom," "the word," and "the word of God"—all synonymous terms—is everything that Jesus spoke of during His earthly ministry (as well as His post-resurrection ministry<sup>21</sup>), and He spoke of and embodied all things contained in the Old

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<sup>21</sup> Acts 1:3, "To these He [Jesus] also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."

Testament, the only “Word” available at that point in time. **All things concerning God’s Word are about Him—**

John 1:1-3, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He [Jesus] was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him [Jesus], and apart from Him [Jesus] nothing came into being that has come into being. 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...

Luke 24:25-27

And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Romans 1:1-4

Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord....

The phrases “the kingdom of the heavens” and “the kingdom of God” should be viewed as synonymous throughout the New Testament, as mentioned previously. Even though Matthew is the only one who uses the particular phrase “the kingdom of the heavens,” all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) concern the same stories and events. It is clear that the individual writers had a preference regarding usage of terminology, but a consistency of thought with one another (and since the original words were penned by men moved by the Spirit of God, this differing terminology in the gospels is divinely *intentional*). Also, one can simply view the following verse from Matthew and see that the two phrases are used interchangeably—

Matthew 19:23-24

And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 24 **And again** I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

This statement is about the ownership of riches and its potential hindrance to *entering into* that which Jesus was speaking about. He clearly says that being rich makes **entrance** into the kingdom

*difficult*; He is not speaking of two different kingdoms, but rather is speaking of *one heavenly* kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup> We will continue to cover the details of this as we go through this study.

Now let's study the message that Jesus brought to Israel at His first advent.

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<sup>22</sup> There is a reason to be vigilant in remembering that the phrase "the kingdom of God" *as Scripture uses it* is synonymous with "the kingdom of the heavens." Our Western/Christian minds sometimes assume the New Testament phrase "the kingdom of God" is referencing God's realm over which He exercises sovereign authority over everything. While YES God is sovereign and reigns supremely over everything, the phrase "the kingdom of God" is not used in Scripture to describe it.

#### **PART IV — JESUS' FIRST COMING**

Let's go back to the beginning of the New Testament when Jesus begins His earthly ministry. The primary thing to understand concerning Jesus' message of "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand"—what is also called "the word of the kingdom"— is *who His audience was*. To whom was He speaking? At this point please do not get caught up in the reflexive response of "He is speaking to you and me!" Because yes, secondarily, He is; but *primarily and contextually*, who did Jesus come to with the message of "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand"? He came to Israel, with a message *for the nation of Israel*—

Matthew 15:24

But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Matthew 10:1, 5-7

And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness... 5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand.'"

John 1:11

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Acts 10:36-39

[Peter speaking] "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— 37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree."

This was a message for the Jewish people *by a Jewish Man*. It was a message *for Jesus' own people*, the nation of Israel. But the nation as a whole rejected it and they crucified their King. *It was only after their full rejection of the message* at the end of Paul's ministry that this same message was then sent on solely to those who would receive it *and* Him—the Gentiles.<sup>23</sup>

Acts 28:17-28

[Approximately 62 AD, nearing the end of Paul's ministry, a few years before his death.]  
And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So

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<sup>23</sup> The crucifixion of Jesus marked a clear point of rejection on behalf of the nation of Israel as a whole. But, in Christ's post-resurrection ministry and His apostles' ministry we see this same message concerning the kingdom being given to Israel *again* (though it now included Gentiles [sometimes called "Greeks"] as well, Rom. 1:16). This was simply a second-chance, so to speak, for the nation to repent, *including what they did to their Messiah*, and believe in the message regarding the kingdom. Read also Acts 2:14-41, 3:12-26, 7:2-60, 13:14-43, and Luke 13:6-9.

when they had come together, he said to them: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18 who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. 19 But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. 20 For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." 21 Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. 22 But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect [Christianity], we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

23 So when they [the leaders of the Jews] had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25 So when they [the leaders of the Jews] did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them."' 28 Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

Read verses 25-27 again. It reads exactly as Matthew 13:14-15 about the parable of the sower regarding "the word of the kingdom"; it's a quote from the same Isaiah passage (Is. 6:9-10). Paul's message of the gospel of the kingdom to Israel was *fully* rejected at this point in the book of Acts, at the end of his almost 30-year ministry. It is exactly the same hardness of heart as when Jesus began speaking in parables to Israel *concerning the mysteries of the kingdom; they did not understand or perceive what He was saying*, and they did not want to turn to Him (*repent*) and have Him heal them. Not only did Israel exhibit *time and time again* a complete lack of concern or interest in the word of the kingdom, they showed hostility and contempt towards it and anyone who preached it.<sup>24</sup>

Jesus' entire earthly ministry was centered on things concerning the kingdom of the heavens/kingdom of God; therefore, what specifically was His message about? *Because that message is the same message that the church needs to hear, understand, and receive* (Matt 21:33-45, Acts 28:23-31, Luke 20:9-17, Mark 12:1-12, Rom. 11:11).

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<sup>24</sup> Many individual Israelites did believe, but the nation *as a whole* did not. Any individual Jew who did believe became a part of the church, no longer a part of the nation of Israel (2 Cor. 5:16-17).

Most of the church over the last century has been taught that the message concerning the kingdom is about the way and the means for those born dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3, those most would call the “unsaved”) to be reconciled to God. In other words, most are taught that **the word of the kingdom** is about salvation/deliverance from an eternity in “hell.”<sup>25</sup> If that were the case, then Jesus’ earthly ministry would have been targeted to *unsaved* individuals (those *dead* in the sight of God), right? And if you follow that train of thought, then one must conclude that the individuals comprising the nation of Israel were not “saved” (did not have spiritual life), *but were completely separated from God* and did not have spiritual understanding. *But can that be true?* Read this passage from Paul to further sort out what we’re talking about—

1 Corinthians 2:1-3:4

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

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<sup>25</sup> Note that even though Paul says in Acts 28:28 “this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles,” he isn’t using the word “salvation” in the sense of “salvation by grace through faith,” our initial salvation. This has to do with the *salvation of the soul*; this “salvation” Paul mentions is relative to the kingdom, “the word of the kingdom.” Reference page 19, footnotes 15 and 16. We’ll continue to study this.

Remember, this study is as much about UNLEARNING as it is about LEARNING; we need to discern between **the doctrines of men** and **the doctrines of God** (Matt. 15:8-9).

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Pay close attention to what Paul says here to his fellow *brethren* (verses 2:1 and 3:1), meaning those of the church, the body of Christ—*saved* individuals.<sup>26</sup> He rebukes them for behaving fleshly, walking like mere men, “babes in Christ” having jealousy and strife among them (3:1-3). His rebuke is based on the fact that even though they have the Spirit within them and are *able to* access the very thoughts of God (2:12), their behavior prevents them from doing so. They were behaving as if they were natural—meaning *unsaved*—(3:3-4) and because of this Paul was unable to give them “solid food” (3:2), the “wisdom [spoken] to those who are mature” (2:6), what he calls “the wisdom of God, spoken in a mystery” (2:7).

Paul makes a clear distinction concerning the natural—meaning *unsaved*—man and the spiritual man. Only the spiritual man (the saved individual who isn’t acting fleshly) can appraise (which means to examine, judge, and discern) spiritual matters (2:14). A natural man cannot appraise spiritual things because they are foolishness to him (2:14). And a fleshly man also cannot appraise spiritual things because they are foolishness to him, *but he has the potential to be able to because he is spiritually alive*. (Read the above Scripture passage a few more times if you need to; grasping this concept is *foundational*.)

So if a natural/unsaved man cannot understand spiritual things and has no potential to be able to understand spiritual things (unless he were to become a “spiritual” man, i.e. *spiritually alive, saved*), why would Jesus come to the nation of Israel *speaking spiritual things, by the power of the Spirit*? Jesus spoke for three years concerning the spiritual things contained within the Old Testament—He spoke about the spiritual meanings behind the letters and words written by the prophets of God before Him (e.g. the Sermon on the Mount [Matt. 5:1-7:29]). He *expected* His people to hear Him, understand Him, and then change their behavior (repent) and accept Him as their King. An unsaved person cannot be taught the intricacies of spiritual matters. An unsaved person can only accept the gift of a price paid on their behalf, or as Paul puts it in 1 Cor. 2:2, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” And when they do, they pass out of death (the death/separation they were born into because of the initial transgression, Eph. 2:1-5 and Rom. 5:12, 19), their spirit is given life, and *then* are able to discern spiritual things; they are *then* able to grow up and mature in the Lord if they so choose.

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<sup>26</sup> This is such an important concept to grasp so I’ll keep repeating it. I’m using the term “saved” in the sense of Eph. 2:1-5 “...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...” This is the same “saved” from Acts 16:30-31 where it says to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” and “you will be saved.” This is being *saved* from “eternal” separation/death from God, what one could call **initial salvation** or regeneration; this is where we all must *begin*, it’s what makes us a new creation in Christ, part of the church, which is His body (2 Cor. 5:7, Gal. 6:15, Col. 1:18, 24). Remember, sin and death came upon man because of the initial transgression, affecting all 3 parts: spirit, soul, and body. Therefore, life (redemption)—**SALVATION**—is necessary for all 3 parts. And the part that is dealt with first—*given life first*—is **the spirit**. The salvation of the soul and body are yet future.

The nation of Israel at Jesus' first coming was a group of *spiritually alive/saved* individuals who had, in the same manner as those Paul addressed in the church at Corinth years later, been acting *fleshly*. This was the crux of the cycle Israel was stuck in since their inception. They would follow God and obey Him, start to stray & become disobedient (committing idolatry, which God considers adultery), God would send a prophet to plead that they repent, Israel would repent and ask for forgiveness, God would forgive them, Israel would follow God and obey Him again, start to stray again & become disobedient again...and the cycle went on and on.<sup>27</sup>

Because the nation of Israel, *particularly their leaders*, were "acting fleshly," they could not understand the spiritual things that Jesus spoke of. That is why John the Baptist first, then Jesus, and then the apostles brought the message of *REPENTANCE*, so that they would realize they needed to *stop acting fleshly* and turn back to God (The Greek word for repent, 'metanoeo' means "to think differently" or "reconsider"). And that is exactly why the prophecy spoken by Isaiah was reiterated by Jesus Himself to the leaders of the nation when they rejected Him and attributed His work to Beelzebul (as did Paul when the leaders rejected this same message 30 years later). The nation of Israel as a whole deserved these words—

Acts 28:25-27

So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.'"

Their turning to God in order to be healed was about their hardness of heart and their disobedience, not about anyone's "unsaved" status. Most assuredly, it is the very ones who are

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<sup>27</sup> Remember, the nation of Israel as a whole was initially *saved out of bondage by a substitutionary death and shed blood that each household had to take part in*. Afterwards the Nation was instructed by Moses to slay lambs *every year* in remembrance of the event in which God provided this means of salvation; this was their *Passover*. And with this, every subsequent generation would need to believe on that for themselves. This was their means of initial salvation/regeneration. It is no different today in that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7) and each person must "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:30-31) in order to be *initially* saved. This is because Jesus is "the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world*" (Rev. 13:8). Pay close attention to what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, **saved individuals**—

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.' 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:1-12).

*able to hear spiritual things and have the capacity to obey them that receive the harshest reprimands if they choose not to.*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Continuing with this thought, we need to understand that the Bible is written to and for redeemed (“saved”) individuals, *those capable of spiritual thoughts concerning these spiritual words* making up the whole of the Scriptures. The Old Testament consists of the prophets of the Lord speaking God’s words (instructions, decrees, commands, and judgments) to His people; the New Testament Gospels concern the message of God Himself, in the flesh, speaking to those with the ability to hear His spiritual words. The New Testament epistles are letters written to the church, explaining doctrine and application to those comprising the body of Christ –*spiritually redeemed individuals*. That is not to say that an unsaved individual cannot find the saving grace power of God within the pages of the Book; *however*, the primary intended audience is *not* the unsaved, but the saved.

## **PART V — ISRAEL**

The gospel of the kingdom was not a brand new message for the nation of Israel. It couldn't have been (though it was being *progressively revealed*, which is the meaning of the word "mystery"; more on that later in the study). Jesus was the Promised One, the Anointed One, the very One that they were anxiously waiting for. The entire Old Testament pointed to the One who would redeem *and save* Israel; therefore, the answer to what the kingdom message was (*and is*) can only be answered by looking through and understanding the Old Testament Scriptures.

(Note: At this point I need to take certain liberties, for it would be too lengthy for us here to go through the exhaustive Scripture verses needed to establish the state of expectation that would have been Israel's at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. I will therefore need to briefly summarize much of Israel's history and I expect that you will be diligent to explore the Scriptures yourself for corroboration.)

After the initial transgression by the first man and first woman (Gen. 3:1-7), we read about God's promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:14-15). God specifically told the serpent (who is Satan, Rev. 12:9) that there would be One Man who would crush his head (though Satan would bruise Him on His heel), and that One Man would be the seed of the woman. This promised One would be the victor over Satan, who Scripture calls "the god of this age," "the ruler of this world," "our adversary," "the father of lies," and a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44, 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor. 4:4, 1 Pet. 5:8).

Fast forward several chapters in Genesis to the sons of Noah—Ham, Shem, and Japheth. After the flood, these three men and their wives were to re-populate the earth; all others had perished. A statement is made in Genesis 9:26-27 that of these three sons, the Lord God (using His specific name, 'Jehovah' 'Elohim') is the God of Shem *only*. Canaan (because of what Ham did, Gen. 9:20-25) would be "a servant of servants unto his brethren" and Japheth would need to go to Shem's tent in order to partake of the Lord God, 'Jehovah Elohim.'<sup>29</sup>

Now to Abram (later called Abraham), who is a direct descendant of Shem (1 Chron. 1:17-26). God makes several very clear promises to Abraham concerning his descendants and a specific, detailed parcel of land that God describes and shows to Abram. The promises are found in Genesis 15-22 and are briefly thus: Abram's descendants would possess a specific parcel of land, they would be numerous in number—"as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore" (Gen. 22:17), through Abram all the families of the earth would be blessed, those

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<sup>29</sup> This statement is extremely important. This sets out at the beginning of God's revelation to man that *He chooses* among men which people group He will reveal Himself, *and His promises*, to. HOWEVER, the option is always open for others to partake, but they must come *through the ones God chooses* to do so.

who bless him God will bless, those who curse him God would curse, God would be *their* God,<sup>30</sup> kings would come forth from Abraham, and his descendants would possess the gate of their enemies.

“Possessing the gate of one’s enemies” means to *rule over* and *have governmental control over* their enemies. The gate/gates of a city represented places of power, authority, defense, and safety. Whoever controls the gate/gates exercises power and authority over everything that could be accessed through those gates. The Hebrew word for “possess” in Gen. 22:17 is ‘yarash,’ which literally means “to drive out previous tenants and possess in their place.” Simply stated, Abraham’s descendants were to be the head of all nations of the world, experiencing *rest* from all their enemies (since they would possess their gates), ruling over them with God in their midst, bringing all His blessings to them.<sup>31</sup>

Do not miss this important concept regarding God’s promises to Abraham: Abraham’s descendants were to rule over the other nations of the earth from this particular piece of land (a land that was to be their *inheritance* and would be passed on generationally [Gen. 15:7-8, 28:4, Ex. 23:29-31, and Deut. 3:28 to name just a few]), experiencing rest from their enemies, with God in their midst and as their Head, bringing God’s blessings to all; in other words, a ***theocratic kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth***.

This is stated another way by Paul: Abraham’s descendants would inherit the world—

Romans 4:13

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Paul, writing to the church in Rome, isn’t out-of-the-blue speaking of some foreign concept of Abraham *inheriting the world*. This is just another way of framing God’s promises to Abraham’s descendants – they would *rule over* everything and everybody on the earth with God. In fact, this is seen clearly in the book of Genesis, the very first chapter—

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

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<sup>30</sup> Progressive revelation regarding the last footnote; this shows the “people group” God chooses—to be *their God* and offer *His promises to*—to be the nation of Israel.

<sup>31</sup> Please take the time to read Genesis chapters 12 through 22 to see these promises for yourself. Make a list or underline them in your Bible as you come across God progressively revealing them to Abram/Abraham. This is foundational and necessary to understand as you mature in the faith.

Man was created *to rule over—have dominion over—the earth and everything in it*.<sup>32</sup> This, however, was in their perfectly created state, prior to the serpent’s deception. When Adam and the woman disobeyed God, sin and death (death means separation) entered into the world (Rom. 5:12, 6:23). And because of this, reconciliation was/is needed in order to bring all things back to their pre-sin/pre-death state. And since man’s original created purpose was to rule, redemption of all things (which is still yet future) will see man back in his position of ruling with God.<sup>33</sup>

Now back to Abraham. God made it very clear which of Abraham’s descendants these promises would be given to. He repeats them to Isaac (not Ishmael), Abraham’s son of promise (Gen. 15:1-4, Gen. 18:9-14, Gen. 21:1-2, Gen. 26:1-5, Heb. 11:17-19), and to Jacob (not Esau), Isaac’s son (Gen. 28:10-15). It is then through Jacob (later called Israel, Gen. 32:22-32) and his twelve sons that God will set up the nation of “His people” (Gen. 35:9-12).

Jacob/Israel, his 12 sons, and their families travel to Egypt during a famine (under Joseph’s second-in-command position over Egypt), make their homes there, and begin to multiply in number. Joseph dies, another pharaoh takes over, and the Hebrew people—the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob—are brought under the bondage of slavery (Genesis chapters 37-47, Ex. 1:1-14).

We then read in Exodus 3:7, “And the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.” God then sends Moses, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to “bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:10-15). Through Moses, God effectively delivers Abraham’s descendants from the bondage of slavery by the use of judgments and a substitutionary death, in order to take them out of Egypt to a very specific part of the land that He promised to them.<sup>34</sup> In this particular part of the Promised Land, which was said to be “flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8, Lev. 20:24, Deut. 6:3) and “the glory of all lands” (Ezek. 20:6), they were to experience the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham (Ex. 29:44-46). While on their journey, God

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<sup>32</sup> Almost every Bible teacher teaches that man being created to “rule over” every living creature simply refers to man’s place of primacy over God’s other creatures. While that is true, this statement at the beginning of Scripture is the start of a *progressive revelation* concerning man’s position of authority within God’s creation.

<sup>33</sup> We will be covering this in more detail as we go along in the study.

<sup>34</sup> The specific story of Moses delivering the nation from Egypt can be found in Exodus, chapters 1-14. It is highly recommended that you read those through. Also read Acts chapter 7 for a brief history lesson from Stephen, a history lesson that gets him killed by the leaders of Israel because he draws the parallels between the forefathers’ rejection of Moses and their rejection of Jesus.

Of import to note, but we won’t get much into the specifics here, the parcel of land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob was much, much larger than the area in which the 12 tribes of Israel eventually settled. Genesis 15:18-21 describes this vast territory, which includes modern-day Israel and parts of Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. God made an unconditional oath (meaning He made it with Himself, see Gen. 15:1-21 and Heb. 6:9-20) to give Abraham this land. With Moses we see God leading His people out of Egypt (*parts of which were in the larger Promised Land*, including the Red Sea) towards a smaller “better” land (within the greater Land) flowing with milk and honey, wherein God would begin to fulfill the rest of His promises to Abraham (the theocracy, ruling over other nations).

revealed to Moses an additional component to these promises—a *conditional aspect* to their entering this land and obtaining the full promises made to their forefathers—

Exodus 19:5-6

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

In order for them to be a kingdom of priests, ruling over other nations, God’s own possession, experiencing rest from their enemies *in this land* in which God’s blessings would flow through them to the surrounding nations, *they would need to obey His commandments*, both individually and more importantly *corporately* (which places responsibility on their leaders to lead them righteously). Then, throughout the rest of Exodus and Leviticus (and some of Numbers, repeated in Deuteronomy to the second generation) we read the exact details of what they were to obey.<sup>35</sup>

About 18 months after the nation’s redemption from bondage in Egypt, this first generation of Israel was brought to the borders of the land “flowing with milk and honey,” to a place called Kadesh Barnea.<sup>36</sup> God told Moses to send out 12 men, *leaders*, one from every tribe to spy out the land of Canaan. They were to “see what the land is like, whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.” (Num. 13:17-20). When the spies returned, with much fruit from the land, they gave a statement that it “certainly does flow with milk and honey” (Num. 13:27), and “the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large...”

HOWEVER, ten of the twelve spies then gave a “bad report” by *saying to the people*, “**We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us**” (Num. 13:31-33). The only two men who stood against them were Joshua and Caleb, who both said “If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.

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<sup>35</sup> This is what is known as the Mosaic Covenant. It would be particularly helpful to read Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28 for a better understanding of what God expected from them, and His stated recompenses for their obedience or lack thereof.

<sup>36</sup> An interesting sequence of events we skipped over in order to make this as concise as possible: Right after the nation was **redeemed** from bondage by the death of a substitutionary lamb, they were brought to the edge of the Red Sea, their enemies (the entirety of Pharaoh’s army) right on their heels. God, through Moses, parted the waters of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites through unharmed, and then once on the opposite side of the shore—with the armies right behind them but still on the seabed—God, through Moses, caused the waters to go back and the sea returned to its normal state. The Red Sea had become a place of *death*, as not one in Pharaoh’s army survived (Exodus 14:1-31). As the Passover is a picture of our initial salvation, the passage through the Red Sea—which occurred afterwards—is a picture of *baptism* (read 1 Cor. 10:1-2, Rom. 6:3-4, Col. 2:9-12, and for comparison to Noah, see 1 Pet. 3:18-22).

Only do not rebel against the Lord; and *do not fear the people of the land*, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.” *“But all the congregation said to stone them with stones”* (Num. 14:8-10).

God’s response was quick—

Numbers 14:11-23

Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." 13 And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 16 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' 17 And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18 'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

20 Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD- 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

The newly born nation of Israel, a generation redeemed out of slavery by miraculous wonders by God Himself just 18 months prior, a nation with the ability to understand spiritual things, *a nation with God in their midst* (Ex. 13:21-22), were not permitted entrance into the land flowing with milk and honey because they “grumbled against God” and **refused to believe** what God had said concerning Himself, and the land (I Cor. 10:1-15).<sup>37</sup> God had promised that they would be victorious in removing the current inhabitants of the land, but the nation of Israel (all but two

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<sup>37</sup> I’ve also skipped over the many, many instances of the people being quite disobedient and disagreeable to the Lord, even at one point making an idol of a calf with their golden earrings, calling it “the god [‘Elohim’] who brought us out of Egypt” because they got tired of waiting for Moses, who was up on the mountain with God (Exodus 32:1-35). Another striking instance is when they grumbled and complained about the food, which was the “manna from heaven,” provided by God Himself. They wanted meat, *just like they got in Egypt*. God responded quickly with a storm of quail, two cubits deep (one cubit was equal to 18 inches) on the surface of the ground. They would eat until “it comes out of their nostrils and becomes loathsome to them, because they rejected the Lord” (Numbers 11:1-35). Their behavior at Kadesh Barnea was the pinnacle of their 18-month long journey of disobedience.

people) grew fearful and did not believe what God had said. God then refused them entrance into the land (Num. 13:25-14:38, Deut. 1:1-46, Heb. 3:8-19) and they were instead to wander around in the wilderness until they all died (the entire first generation, consisting of those 20 years and older, except Joshua and Caleb [Num. 14:29-30]).<sup>38</sup>

A little over 38 years after the events at Kadesh Barnea (40 years after their redemption from Egypt), Joshua led the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the second generation), into the land.<sup>39</sup> For about seven years Joshua led the armies of Israel in the successful (yet not total) conquest of their enemies, and they settled in the land that God had promised them. For a while they experienced rest from their enemies, but the nation spiraled into disobedience. God had made it abundantly clear what the consequences for disobedience were (Lev. 26:1-46, Deut. 28:1-68). If God's people, the nation of Israel as a whole, remained obedient (which encompassed repenting and offering sacrifices for their sins), they would remain in the land and the promises (concerning possessing the gates of their enemies and bringing God's blessing to all the nations) would be fulfilled. If the nation as a whole did not obey, they would be given into the hands of their enemies. As the Scriptures tell us, their history was one of continued disobedience; therefore, the promises were never fully realized and they were finally *fully* given into the hands of their enemies.<sup>40</sup>

Remember, it wasn't a question of *if* God would deliver on His promises to Abraham; it was just a question of when.

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<sup>38</sup> Even though the first generation of the nation of Israel were not allowed to enter into their promised land (except Joshua and Caleb), *God was still their God* and watched over them and took care of their basic needs; He did not completely forsake them.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua, not Moses, led them in. Moses had forfeited his right to enter into the better land by disobeying God. He struck the rock in the wilderness of Zin, a rock that he was told to *talk to* and not strike. Read about it in Numbers 20:1-13 and Deuteronomy 3:23-29.

<sup>40</sup> This is essentially what the Old Testament is about. The Book of Judges describes how in Israel everyone was doing "what was right in their own eyes" (Judg. 21:25) and God would raise up military champions ("judges" aka "deliverers") to throw off the yoke of bondage from their enemies and restore the nation to obedience to God. But their "sin cycle" continued. In the books of 1 & 2 Samuel the prophet Samuel anointed the first king of Israel, Saul, in answer to the evil request made by the nation to have a king "like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:4-9). King Saul strayed from God and Samuel anointed David, the second king over Israel and "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14, Acts 13:22). The numerous kings who came after David were mostly evil and disobedient to varying degrees, though some were good (to varying degrees); the nation of Israel was then divided into a northern kingdom (called Israel) and a southern kingdom (called Judah) (1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles) after King Solomon's reign, because he forsook God and worshipped other gods (1 Kings 11:31-35). The books of the prophets are simply records of prophets that God raised up during the times of the kings and the captivity, warning the people to repent of their evil behavior and return to God. At last, when God could take no more of their disobedience, he allowed the Assyrians to conquer and take into captivity the northern kingdom of Israel (comprised of 10 tribes) and about 135 years later the Babylonians conquered and took into captivity the southern kingdom of Judah (comprised of 2 tribes). After a time of about 70 years under Babylonian domination, a remnant was allowed to return to the land of Israel and rebuild their temple & temple wall (Zerubbabel in 535 BC, followed by Ezra and Nehemiah around 457- 444 BC), but they would remain under the rule of other nations (Israel being ruled over by the nations as a consequence of their disobedience is called "the times of the Gentiles" [Luke 21:24], which began with Nebuchadnezzar and will continue until Jesus returns and deals with them a second time), which is the state of Israel that existed when Jesus came to them the first time. (Numerous Psalms also record their history, giving additional details: Psalm 78, 105, and 106, to name a few.)

Now let's turn our thoughts back to the phrase "the word of the kingdom." Recall what Israel's purpose was. They were to be the head of the nations, *with God at their head*, ruling over all other nations, free from subjection under their enemies, while delivering God's blessings to all. They were to be a theocratic kingdom. Again, *this was their created purpose, the purpose for their redemption from Egypt*. They never fully achieved this and they looked forward to the day in which they would. And along the way the promise of One from their midst leading them to the fulfillment of their calling was clear—

Deuteronomy 18:15

[Moses speaking] "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."

2 Samuel 7:12-14

[God speaking through Samuel to David] "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me..." <sup>41</sup> (SEE FOOTNOTE 41)

Isaiah 9:6-7

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Luke 1:31-33

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

Hebrews 1:1-5

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds [literally "ages"]; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels

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<sup>41</sup> This is why the title "Son of David" is so important. Based on the words of the prophets, Israel knew that their Messiah would be from the direct lineage of King David, as these verses state, but **also** would be God's Son, as verse 14 states. Read also Acts 13:21-23, Rom. 1:3-4, Matt. 22:42-46, Acts 2:29-31, 2 Tim. 2:8, and Rev. 22:16.

did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? [Direct quote from 2 Samuel 7:14]

Acts 3:17-26

[Peter speaking to the Jews right after Jesus' ascension] "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. 18 But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. 22 Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. 25 It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

The fulfillment of man's purpose, the fulfillment of Israel's purpose & the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, and the fulfillment of the promises of the One King setting up His Kingdom are all *one and the same*. It was what the nation of Israel was looking for and expecting. So the One born King of the Jews coming with a message concerning the establishment of the kingdom—the *word of the kingdom*—would have been (*should have been*) a time of overwhelming excitement to the nation. Remember that the people asked, just prior to the leaders attributing Jesus' power to the ruler of the demons, whether this Man was indeed the Son of David? Read 2 Samuel 7:14 again and see that the thoughts surrounding this Expected One could only have gone to thoughts of the establishment of the kingdom. It was a continuation of the same messages that the prophets had brought (note Hebrews 1:1-2)—Repent in order that God can fulfill His promises in you! Jesus was saying these same things. Yet, as they killed the prophets before Him, they simply did not want to hear or understand or turn their hardened hearts back to God. So they killed their King.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Read also Acts 2:1-41, 5:29-32, 7:1-60, 13:14-43. Israel's history is immensely important for us, the church, to understand. Read again 1 Cor. 10:1-12. The nation of Israel is our example so that we don't fall in the same way they did. There is something very important *and very real* that we stand to lose if we don't realize and take heed to this (read also Heb. 1:1-2:5).

## **PART VI – THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH**

Let's continue with more foundational material in order to understand more details concerning Jesus' proclamation of "the kingdom of the heavens is at hand," the "word of the kingdom."

The plural noun "the heavens" (Greek 'ouranois,' Hebrew 'shamayim,' *with a definite article* <sup>43</sup>) in Scripture needs to be differentiated from other variations of the word, i.e. "heaven," "heavens," "the heaven," "firmament," "the air," etc. "The heavens" is very often *not* referring to the place where God's throne is, which Scripture also calls "the third heaven," "Paradise," and "the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north" (2 Cor. 12:2-4, Isa. 14:13), to name a few. Unfortunately, many of us were taught to think that *every time* we see or hear the word "heaven" in Scripture we should treat it like a proper noun, with a capitalized "H" signifying God's place of abode and/or man's final destination after death. And as we saw earlier, the English versions' translations of "the kingdom of heaven" instead of the literal "the kingdom of the heavens" has attributed to this confusion (this also happens in many other places in our English Bibles—the plural form "the heavens" isn't carried over accurately; this is why an interlinear can be quite helpful).

(Note: Again, for our purposes here I need to take certain liberties to scale down the amount of time we spend unpacking this vast topic. I am only touching the surface on this, please study further on what is presented.)

In short, the ancient Hebrews believed there were three "heavens" and Scripture bears this out. In Genesis 1:1 "the heavens" (erroneously translated as "the heaven" or "heaven" in many English Bibles) is referring to the 'cosmos,' or 'outer space' as we usually refer to it. We know this because of the description of stars and great lights (sun, moon) for day, night, time in following verses (see also Is. 13:10, Jer. 8:2). In Genesis 1:6-8 another "heaven" is mentioned—in the singular form—and this "expanse" is referring to the atmosphere above the earth (read also Acts 14:17, Deut. 28:12). Lastly, in Deuteronomy 10:14 (see also Psalm 68:33) we read "Behold, to the Lord your God belong the heaven of the heavens, the earth and all that is in it." This "heaven of the heavens" is the third heaven as mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:2-4, which is where God's throne is, with Jesus Christ currently sitting at His right hand (also see Heb. 7:26, "For such a High Priest [Jesus] was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens").<sup>44</sup>

Remember that the phrases "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God" are *synonymous*. Jesus, and his apostles after Him, were *offering entrance into a kingdom* (Matt.

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<sup>43</sup> In both the Hebrew and Greek languages there is a way to indicate whether there is a "the" or an "a/an" in front of a noun, and that is with the use of a definite article. If the definite article is used, that means there is a "the" in front of the noun, pointing out a very specific thing or person that the author is talking about; if there is no definite article, then it's read as an "a/an" in front of the noun to indicate a more generic thing or person. For example, if I asked you to bring me a book, it could be any book; if I asked you to bring me THE book, you'd know it was a specific one.

<sup>44</sup> On many occasions "the heavens" or "heaven" is referring to where God is, so this is NOT a hard rule; we must always rely on context. See 2 Chron. 6:33-39, Psalm 2:4, and Psalm 115:3, to name just a few. My point here is to make sure you don't reflexively think *every* use of the noun "heaven" is ONLY referring to God's abode.

19:23-24), referring to an actual theocratic kingdom promised to Abraham's descendants. There is a very common misconception taught in the church today that "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God" are referring to God's righteous, sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent rule over all the earth (or His rule in our hearts). But how could this be what it means? Let's think it through. Why would Jesus come to God's people—a saved people with the capacity for spiritual understanding— with a message of *repent in order to enter into a kingdom*, a kingdom promised to Abraham's descendants, and have it mean something nebulous like entering into God's sovereign rule over everything? At every given point in time, **God alone rules sovereignly over everything already**. Therefore, we are all already in His sphere of rule. So what exactly is "the kingdom of THE HEAVENS?"

Let's start at the beginning—

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

This very first verse of Scripture literally reads "*In beginning*, God created the heavens and the earth" (there is no definite article before "beginning"). It's not THE beginning of everything ever; it's just a beginning. In beginning the story about man, his purpose, and *God's revelation of Himself to man* (which is what the Bible is about), God begins by telling us He created the heavens (outer space) and the earth. In this first chapter of Genesis we read about things in both the heavens (outer space) and the earth. On the earth: waters, land, vegetation, plants, and trees. In the heavens: lights to separate day and night & two great lights, all for signs, seasons, days, years (the demarcation of time, for our benefit).<sup>45</sup> Furthermore we see creatures made for the earth: sea monsters, birds, creeping things, beasts, cattle, and lastly *man*, in God's Own image and likeness (Gen. 1:2-27), completely distinct from all other creatures. In this recorded beginning in Genesis, however, *we do not see creatures created for the heavens*.

YET, there *are* created beings in the heavens—

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of darkness (literally "against the rulers of the darkness of this age"), against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places [literally, "the heavenlies"].

Colossians 1:16-20

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions (literally "governments") or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place

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<sup>45</sup> The heavens described in this first verse of Scripture depict the outer space directly connected to this earth: *things we can see from here on Earth* as we gaze up into the heavens. Read Gen. 1:1-19 again to make sure you can see this.

in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him. 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in [the] heaven[s].

Ephesians tells us there are *rulers* – spiritual forces of wickedness, rulers of the darkness of this age— that currently exist in the heavens that we battle; *they are our enemies* (read also Matt. 13:39, John 8:44, 1 Pet. 5:8). Colossians tells us that there are VISIBLE thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities (earthly kings and governments that we can see) **and** INVISIBLE thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities (kings and princes and governments in the heavens that we cannot see). This is a very important concept to grasp, so read these verses again if you need to.

“The heavens” that are being referred to here are the same “heavens” mentioned in Gen. 1:1— outer space, the cosmos, the seemingly endless space above Earth's atmosphere *that is directly connected to this earth*, NOT including God's dwelling place in the highest recesses of the north, the heaven of heavens.<sup>46</sup> In this space called “the heavens” exist **invisible** rulers, authorities— *created beings with thrones* that are wicked, powerful forces of darkness that we humans battle against. We don't need to go much further to figure out that Satan – the one called “the prince of the power of the air,” “the god of this age,” and “the ruler of this world”— and his fallen angels/demons are the ones being referenced as the wicked INVISIBLE *rulers* with *dominion* in the heavenly places (read Job 1:6, 2:1, 15:14-16, Luke 4:5-6, Matt. 12:24, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor. 4:4, 11:14).

And notice Colossians 1:16-20 states that all the visible and invisible thrones, governments, rulers and authorities were created **by Jesus** and they all need reconciling **back to Jesus**, *both heavenly and earthly*.

It's easy to understand that the earthly rulers—along with their positions of authority on earth— need reconciliation, because death and sin entered mankind due to the transgression of Adam and the woman, corrupting everything. But we also need to realize that the rulers in the heavens—along with the positions of authority in the heavens—need reconciling as well. So the question is, when and how did sin enter in to the heavenly positions of power? Let's take a look at a prophecy from Isaiah –

Isaiah 14:12-15

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

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<sup>46</sup> Remember, in beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth. The heavens are the cosmos, not His dwelling place. God did not create His dwelling place in Genesis 1:1; His dwelling place has always existed, as has He.

Here in Isaiah we see a prophecy directed primarily to the king of Babylon (Is. 14:4-11), but the prophecy switches to direct the words to the “star of the morning (Lucifer)” the “son of dawn.” We can know this to be the serpent of old/the devil/Satan/the god of this age and ruler of this world (Rev. 12:9, 2 Cor. 4:4, John 14:30) from several clues; the first of which is the reference to “falling from heaven,” which would be out of context to an earthly man-king. Second, the mention of a throne being raised above the stars of God (referencing angels, Satan being an angel himself) points to the throne of Satan (and we know he has one, see Rev. 2:13), as well as him wanting to make himself “like the Most High,” which is exactly in character with the serpent of old and his initial deception (Gen. 3:1-5). Lastly, the title “Lucifer/star of the morning” conveys the thought of a bright light, which we are told describes Satan (2 Cor. 11:14).

From this we can see that Lucifer/Satan at some point in time past sought to elevate his throne above the other angels in order to sit on the mount of assembly (a description of where God dwells) in the upper recesses of the north (the highest point) and wanted to be “like the Most High” (see also 1 Tim. 3:4-6). Because of this, God promises that Lucifer/Satan will be thrust down in the exact opposite direction, to the lower recesses of the pit (which is another iteration of the prophecy of the seed of the woman crushing his head, given in Gen. 3:15, fulfilled in Rev. 20:1-10).

Ezekiel gives us additional commentary on this—

Ezekiel 28:11-19

Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, 12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, 13 you were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you (literally “will cast you”) as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you (literally “will destroy you”), O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you (literally “will cast you”) to the ground; I put you (literally “will put you”) before kings that they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire (literally “will bring fire”) from the midst of you; it has consumed you (literally “it will consume you”). And I have turned you (literally “will turn you”) to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified (literally “will become terrified”), and you will be no more.””

This lamentation/prophecy concerning “the king of Tyre” is directed to Satan, who is the invisible, heavenly ruler in a position of power over the visible, earthly ruler, “the prince of Tyre” (Ezek. 27:1-28:10, see again Col. 1:16-20).<sup>47</sup> God recounts his previous position before he desired to ascend his throne above God’s throne and rebelled. Satan/Lucifer was the anointed cherub<sup>48</sup>, *perfect in beauty*, blameless, full of wisdom, possessing the *seal of perfection*, in Eden the garden of God, with every precious stone as his covering.<sup>49</sup> But then by the “abundance of his trade” he became “internally filled with violence” and sinned, and unrighteousness was found in him. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty and he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his splendor. *He profaned his sanctuaries by this act*. Therefore, God promise that He will cast him from the mountain of God, destroy him, cast him to the ground, shame him before kings, bring fire from the midst of him to consume him, and he will be no more.

But this prophecy is in the *future tense*; it has not happened yet (even though so many English translations show it erroneously in past tense, like the NASB we used here). As we see throughout the Old Testament, and particularly in the New Testament, *Satan still possesses his throne in the heavens*. He still has a kingdom, in the heavens.<sup>50</sup> So even though from the first prophecy in Genesis 3 we know that Satan’s head will be crushed and he will be thrown into the pit (in the lake of fire) for his grievous sin against God and man, Satan is still ruling over the earth, from the heavens.

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<sup>47</sup> Which is just as we saw in Isaiah 14:12-14.

For more detail on heavenly beings having titles of royalty, read Daniel 10:1-21. Specifically mentioned are angelic beings called “the prince of Persia” and “the prince of Greece,” both fighting at different times against the angel of the Lord sent to Daniel (fights that take place *in the heavens*). Also in Daniel 10:13 & 21 Michael “the archangel” (Jude 1:9) is called “one of the chief princes,” as well as “the great prince who stands guard over the sons of [Israel]” in Daniel 12:1. Quite interesting to note from Daniel 10 is *the order* of the battles between the angel of the Lord and the princes of Persia and Greece; the prince of Persia is first, followed by the prince of Greece. Compare this with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great statue and Daniel’s interpretation of it pertaining to 4 kingdoms (of which Nebuchadnezzar’s was the first) in Daniel 2:26-44, as well as the vision of the ram and goat in Daniel chapter 8. The ram with two horns represented the Median-Persian kingdom (8:20), which had just conquered and replaced Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian kingdom (seen back in Daniel chapter 5), and the goat represents the kingdom of Greece (8:21), which conquered the Medes & Persians (we know this historically). This tells us that there are heavenly rulers – *angels*, called “princes” – that directly correspond with earthly rulers.

<sup>48</sup> Cherubs are *always* heavenly beings, never earthly. Word search “cherub” and “cherubim” and see their context.

<sup>49</sup> He was in Eden *in his perfect state*, prior to his rebellion against God. Yet when man was created, Satan the serpent is in Eden, only now *in his fallen state*. This is how we know something happened to this angelic being prior to the creation of man.

<sup>50</sup> Read Matthew 4:8-9 and Luke 4:5-8. They recount the devil’s attempt at tempting Jesus, and he specifically offers Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world” that were “handed over” to him and he is able to “give it to whomever [he] wish[es].” Jesus does not tell him that they aren’t his to give; He simply rebukes him that it is written in the Scriptures to worship and serve the Lord God only. See also Luke 11:18 where Jesus says, “And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall *his kingdom* stand?” From the Matthew and Luke account, along with what we read in Daniel chapter 10, we can conclude that not only does Satan’s kingdom stretch throughout the heavens, but it covers the earthly Gentile kingdoms/nations as well. This is why, from the very beginning of the nation of Israel’s creation, God did not “reckon them among the nations” (Num. 33:9); they instead had God’s archangel Michael as their *prince* (Daniel 12:1).

However, Jesus has already won the victory over him by His death and resurrection. Jesus already has victory over death and sin. **But we do not yet see it in our present place in time.** It will happen at a time yet future, when Jesus returns to the earth to reconcile all things to Himself (*visible and invisible*). He will remove Satan from his throne, usher in His heavenly kingdom as King, and rule *with fully redeemed man* at His side.<sup>51</sup> (We will be looking at this in more detail in this study, but for starters you can read 1 Cor. 15:1-58, Psalm 2:1-12, 8:3-7, Heb. 2:5-8, Matt 19:28, Rev. 3:21, Dan. 7:22, 2 Tim. 2:12, 1 Cor. 9:25, 2 Tim. 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Pet. 5:3-4, and Rev. 2:10.)

We see glimpses throughout the Old Testament referencing both earthly and heavenly realms as distinctly separate *yet connected*, as far back as Genesis 1:1 with their creation. We see in Joseph's dreams in Genesis 37:6-10 mention of sheaves in the field bowing down to *one sheaf* (earthly) and the sun and moon and stars also bowing down to *one* (heavenly). We see Abraham's descendants described as being as numerous as *the stars of heaven* and *sand on the seashore*. Jacob has a dream (Gen. 28:12-15) in which a ladder is set on the earth, reaching into the heavens, with angels ascending and descending on it. In Job we see "the sons of God" (angels) presenting themselves before God's throne in the heaven of heavens (numerous times), and when God asks Satan where he's been, he answers "going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it" (Job 1:6-7, also Job 2:1-2). And lastly, in Revelation where the end of this age is depicted, we see the culmination of all things when the earthly kings and governments and the heavenly, spiritual forces of darkness are removed and then *replaced*.

So the word of the kingdom, the *offer of the kingdom of the heavens*, is just that—the offer of participating in the heavenly realm of the kingdom *after Jesus reconciles it back to Himself*.<sup>52</sup> The promises made to Abraham and his descendants were both *earthly* and *heavenly* in scope; they would possess the gates of their enemies—both *earthly* enemies and *heavenly* enemies—and all that entailed. The Old Testament dealt primarily with the theocratic kingdom *on earth*, and the New Testament opens with an offer for Abraham's descendants to take part in the coming theocratic kingdom *in the heavens*.<sup>53</sup> But as with the Mosaic covenant regarding the earthly theocratic kingdom, participation in the kingdom of the heavens was, and still is, *conditional*.

For the nation of Israel to understand the message that John the Baptist, Jesus, and then the apostles preached, they needed to *repent* in order to be forgiven of their sins and healed, so that their eyes would see and their ears would hear and their hearts would understand *the mysteries*

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<sup>51</sup> Remember man's created purpose, Gen. 1:26-28.

<sup>52</sup> Which is part of what the seven seals (which also contain the seven trumpets and seven vials) are all about in Revelation; the *redemption* of His inheritance. Read Psalm 2.

<sup>53</sup> It is not to say that the heavenly portion of the kingdom wasn't comprehensible by the Old Testament saints; it most certainly was. We know this from the entirety of Hebrews 11, but verses 13-16 specifically, "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

*of the kingdom of the heavens.* But they did not repent, not even after 30 years of preaching by the apostles. The kingdom of the heavens was taken away from them (*though the earthly one was not and has not been*)<sup>54</sup> and will be given to a new nation producing the fruit of it (Matt. 21:43).

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<sup>54</sup> Read Genesis 15:7-21 where God enters into an *unconditional* covenant with Abram (v.18) concerning the earthly land. Throughout the Old Testament are numerous prophecies about God one day establishing the nation of Israel in their specific land; they will one day return to the Lord and be healed, and be a theocratic kingdom on earth according to God's promises (when Jesus returns). *But they will have to go through a great tribulation first.* Here are some places to read about it: Zech. 12:10-13:9, 14:1-21, Is. 11:1-16, 45:1-25, 59:1-21, Jer. 30:1-24, Ezek. 36:1-37:28, Hosea 6:1-11, Joel 3:16-21. Note that their establishment back in the land will be when they, *as a nation*, repent and receive Jesus their Messiah, whom they crucified. Therefore the current nation of Israel residing in the land *is not a fulfillment of any prophecy.* They are there in a state of disobedience, having rejected Jesus their King and still yet repentant for doing so.

## **PART VII – THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS**

Now that we've defined what the kingdom of the heavens is, we need to go back to one of the Scripture passages we looked at earlier and read it through again; this time also incorporating some verses that follow it –

Matthew 13:10-17

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of [the] heaven[s], but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

Matthew 13:51-52

Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed [literally, "being made a disciple"] concerning the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Jesus began to speak in parables because although his disciples *had* been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, the scribes and Pharisees and multitudes, *those without eyes to see nor ears to hear*, had not been granted it.<sup>55</sup> Read verse 11 again. Jesus doesn't say "to you it has been granted to know *about* the kingdom of the heavens," He says they have been granted to know "*the mysteries*" of the kingdom of the heavens. And in verse 12 He says that *knowing* these mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens opens up **an abundance of understanding**—whoever has [knowledge] will be given more [knowledge], but whoever does not have [knowledge], what he has [knowledge] will be taken away. That's why the parables... those who have knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens will understand the parables and gain more knowledge from them and the Scriptures; those who do not have knowledge of the mysteries will not understand the parables and will not gain more knowledge from them or the Scriptures. And once there is understanding and knowledge, a disciple (or more

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<sup>55</sup> Remember that the scribes and Pharisees, along with all of Israel to whom Jesus came with His message of the kingdom, were *redeemed/saved* individuals with the capacity for understanding *spiritual things*. Their "dull hearts" resulted in their refusal to repent of their disobedience and unbelief, further resulting in being unable to see or hear that which was presented to them (and vice-versa, a vicious cycle).

accurately “a scribe who *is being made a disciple*”) of the kingdom of the heavens will be like a *master of his house*, able to bring out *new* and *old* things from the treasure of the Scriptures. And the key to it all is an open heart and a repentant spirit to the Lord (v. 15) in receiving the word of the kingdom.

Jesus says in verse 17 that many prophets and righteous men *desired* to see and hear what his disciples were seeing and hearing, but *they did not* because it was in a mystery.

So what does Scripture mean by the word “mystery”? **It does not mean that there are hidden knowledge and secrets in the Scriptures that only a few special people can understand** (that would be Gnosticism, which is *not scriptural at all*).<sup>56</sup>

Let’s read what is recorded in Matthew chapter 13, immediately after the fourth parable in the 7-parable sequence, wherein Jesus starts speaking in parables for the first time—

Matthew 13:34-35

All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.” (A quote from Psalm 78:2)

The parables Jesus spoke were about *things kept secret from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 13:35), and Matt 13:11 clearly says that the parables are about “**knowing the mysteries** of the kingdom of the heavens.” So a “mystery” in God’s terminology is something that was previously hidden or veiled, but is *at a later time* progressively revealed and opened up to those who have “ears to hear” and “eyes to see.” Large portions of the *complete* picture of Jesus and God’s plan and purposes were held in a *mystery* in the Old Testament. Now, with the unfolding of God’s written Word—through the pen of the New Testament writers *as they write about the Word made flesh*—we are able to know and understand deep spiritual truths with much more detail.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The deceitfulness of Gnosticism (from the Greek word ‘gnosis,’ which means “knowledge”) is sometimes hard to discern, and I bring it up because it has been making a comeback in Christendom today, though very subtly. Gnosticism is an ancient (and present) belief system (with many offshoots) that states *through the attaining of knowledge* man can achieve total enlightenment and perfection; but this knowledge is *secret* (“esoteric”) and can only be known by a privileged few, and is completely apart from anything having to do with Jesus Christ (though some gnostic offshoots use the name of Jesus in other ways). Compare this to the New Testament’s use of the words for knowledge, ‘gnosis’ and ‘epignosis.’ Gnosis simply means general knowledge, but epignosis literally means “knowledge upon knowledge,” or *mature* knowledge, always in connection with Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:17, 4:13, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Colossians 1:9-10, 2:2, 3:10, 1 Timothy 2:4, and 2 Peter 1:1-12 are some places that can help you see the difference. Unfortunately the English translation of both of those words is always just “knowledge,” so you’ll need your Bible tools to know which word is which.

<sup>57</sup> Just to clarify: the complexities and layers of the depths of God’s wisdom cannot be fully unearthed by any man or woman in this current age. God is omnipresent, omniscient, all-powerful and above all; fallen man is none of these things. However, we do have “the mind of Christ” and the Holy Spirit within us, so we can learn and understand deep spiritual truths, “solid food” as it’s called. The quest for knowledge and understanding must be within the confines of Spirit-seeking humility, as Paul emphasizes, “[I]f I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge (“gnosis”); and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2).

Paul dealt with “the mysteries” quite a bit in his letters; in fact, he calls himself a “steward of the mysteries of God” in 1 Cor. 4:1 and “an ambassador in chains” of the “mystery of the gospel” in Eph. 6:19-20. Let’s look at this passage again from 1 Corinthians –

1 Corinthians 2:1-3:4

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

6 However, we speak **wisdom among those who are mature**, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the **hidden wisdom** which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?

Verses 6 and 7 are clear: Paul speaks wisdom among those of the church who are *mature*, but it is not the wisdom of this age nor of the rulers of this age [both earthly and heavenly rulers], who are coming to nothing (because when the time of reconciliation comes they will be *removed* and *replaced*). He speaks the wisdom of God *in a mystery*, which is the hidden wisdom that God

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ordained before the ages *for our glory*. And as we studied previously, this wisdom that comes in the form of a mystery is for those mature members of the body of Christ who are capable of spiritual understanding and *not acting fleshly* (unlike the scribes and Pharisees in the Matthew passage who were blinded to the mysteries being unfolded). Paul likens these fleshly members of the church to *babes in Christ*, unable to partake of solid food (the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery); indeed, they are only able to take in milk. The writer of Hebrews adds a bit more with this passage –

Hebrews 5:11-6:3 (writing to the church)

Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal [literally, “age-lasting”] judgment. 3 And this we shall do if God permits.

The writer of Hebrews has much to say about Melchizedek—what he calls mature teachings, or “solid food”—but *he can’t* because those to whom he’d like to explain these things have become dull of hearing (exactly as Matt. 13:11-17). They in fact should be teachers by now; instead, they need to go back to the elementary teachings again, what the writer calls “milk.” And the reason why they aren’t mature enough to partake of this solid food, this “word of righteousness”? They haven’t practiced training their senses to discern good and evil (11:14). This is no different from the scenario Paul had at the church in Corinth; they were acting fleshly and could not mature onto receiving solid food, the wisdom of God spoken in a mystery.

Paul explains a bit about *the revelation of the mystery* here in Romans –

Romans 16:25-27

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to **obedience of [the] faith**; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

The revelation of the mystery *which has been kept secret for long ages past* is now manifested through Paul’s teaching of the gospel and through the preaching of Jesus Christ (one and the same message, the “gospel of the kingdom,” a message for those with the capacity to understand

*spiritual* things).<sup>58</sup> This mystery is being made known to *all the nations*—Gentiles who are now being brought the message of the kingdom of the heavens since Israel rejected it—to bring about their *obedience to the faith*. And this is done, not through Paul’s persuasive words of wisdom (the “wisdom of men” 1 Cor. 2:4-5), but by Him, Jesus, who is the One who is able to *establish* mature members of the body (those obedient to the faith).

Further passages from Paul as he unveils and expands on these mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens to the church –

Romans 11:25-29

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." 28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The *mystery* Paul is expanding on here in Romans is the mystery of the “partial hardening” of Israel, the very thing we covered concerning the kingdom of the heavens being taken from Israel and given to the Gentiles (*a nation [in Christ] producing the fruits of the kingdom*, Matt. 21:43) because the nation of Israel as a whole refused to heed Jesus’ message and instead crucified him. Paul wants the brethren to know that it is a *partial hardening* and in the end “all Israel” will be saved.<sup>59</sup> As you can imagine, the first Christians—most of them Jews—would have been struggling to make sense of their countrymen’s rejection of Jesus their Messiah and His message, and wondering what would become of the nation as a whole. Additionally, they would have been struggling to understand that their old way of life—the governing of their entire lives according to the Law, as taught by their spiritual leaders— was now to be completely overturned as they are taught to “serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6), this “new and living way” (Heb. 10:20) *governed by faith*—and **obedience** to it (Rom. 1:5 and 16:26)—rather than obedience to the letter of the Law they’d been immersed in their whole lives.

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<sup>58</sup> The “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:43, Mark 1:14) is for those already saved; the “gospel of the grace of God” is for the unsaved (Acts 20:24, Eph. 2:8-9) – two sides of the same coin, so to speak. Note how Paul sums up his ministry in Acts 20:24-27, “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the **gospel of the grace of God**. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone **preaching the kingdom of God**, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

<sup>59</sup> Note the context in the Book of Romans, particularly chapters 9-11; “all Israel” doesn’t mean every descendant of Jacob, but a remnant whom God Himself reserves. The nation of Israel has not been done away with or replaced by the church, as so many people teach today. The Scriptures are very clear that repentant, obedient Israel will one day take her rightful place in the *earthly* kingdom unconditionally promised to them by God to Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob. The *heavenly* kingdom is what they forfeited.

Paul writes further to the church in Ephesus about the revelation of the mysteries, this time with a focus on “the mystery of [God’s] will” made known to us—

Ephesians 1:7-10

In Him [God] we have redemption through His [Jesus’] blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His [God’s] will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

Again, we see that God makes His mysteries *known*, the mystery of His will which He purposed in Christ with a view to the gathering together—the *reconciling*—of all things into Christ... all things (visible and invisible) in the heavens and on earth (reference Col 1:16-20 from earlier). And further in Ephesians –

Ephesians 3:1-12

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me **the mystery**, as I wrote before in brief. 4 And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the **mystery of Christ**, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration [literally “fellowship,” Greek ‘koinonia’] of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose [literally, “purpose of the ages”] which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

And here we have a wonderful summation of the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens: Gentiles are *fellow heirs and partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus*, the promises that stretched throughout the Old Testament regarding the seed of the woman crushing the serpent’s head, progressively revealed through the promises to Abraham’s descendants—the nation of Israel—that they would possess the gates of both their earthly enemies and their heavenly enemies *with God at their Head* in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God Himself in the flesh.<sup>60</sup> Paul is the minister of this *good news* to the Gentiles, to bring to light the fellowship of the

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<sup>60</sup> Other great places to read about the door being opened to Gentiles is Acts 10-11:18 and Acts 22:1-22, as well as Romans chapter 11 which was just mentioned.

mystery (of the kingdom of the heavens) that has been “hidden in God” until this time... the manifold wisdom of God that the church (the new nation in Christ) is now the recipient of the message of the word of the kingdom, and that *we would make this known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places*. The rulers being Satan and his fallen angels, who Jesus and His fellow heirs will one day replace—

Romans 8:12-19

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption [literally “son placement”] as sons by which we cry out, “Abba, Father!” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

To be an “heir” means you are in line to *inherit*. If you are “an heir of God,” you are in line to inherit something *from God*. If you are “an heir of God” and “a fellow heir with Christ,” then you are in line to inherit something from God, *the same something that Jesus is in line to inherit*. But being a fellow heir with Christ is **conditional**; the heirs of God are fellow heirs—a term that is synonymous with being a “son of God”—with Christ **ONLY IF** they suffer with Christ; and a son of God **ONLY IF** they are being led by the Spirit.

To state it a different way, initial salvation puts one into the family of God, thereby a “child of God.” Once a child, then an heir. And the child who leads a life following the Spirit, being faithfully obedient, who allows the child-training of the Lord throughout their time in this body (as seen in Hebrews 12:1-10), will be revealed as a **son** of God, a fellow heir with Christ, in the age to come when Christ Himself is revealed.<sup>61</sup>

Further commentary on the revealing of “the sons of God” can be found in Hebrews and in Colossians—

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<sup>61</sup> Read Hebrews 12:1-17. Now read Psalm 2, and see verse 8 specifically, “[God speaking to Jesus] Ask of Me, and I will surely give You the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.” Compare with Hebrews 1:2 where God’s Son is “heir of all things” (keeping in mind what we learned from Colossians 1:16-20 what constitutes “all things”); Hebrews 1:5 uses a portion of Psalm 2 to support this. Also remember Romans 4:13, that Abraham would be “heir of the world,” and also Matthew 5:5 where Jesus says “the meek shall inherit the earth.” Word search “inherit” and you’ll find numerous New Testament verses, including “inherit the kingdom” several times, “inherit the promises” and Revelation 21:7, “He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.” Read also Eph. 5:22-32, 1 Cor. 15:1-58, Col. 1:24-27, 1 Thess. 2:10-12, 2 Thess. 1:1-12, 2:13-15, 1 Pet. 1:3-16, 4:12-13, Rev. 3:21.

#### Hebrews 2:1-12

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

5 For He has not put the world [literally, “inhabited earth”] to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet" [quote from Psalm 8]. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect [complete] through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

#### Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

The inhabited earth *to come* will **not** be in subjection to—governed by—angels. We learned previously that *this current world* is governed by angels *in the heavens*, fallen angels who are “the rulers of the darkness of this age,” specifically Satan, (and the angels who rebelled with him, Rev. 12:4, 9) “the ruler of this world” and “the god of this age.” The world to come will be governed by MAN, and Hebrews says it is Jesus, the Son of Man, and His “many sons” brought to glory that will be in that position. Colossians states that these many “sons” will be revealed in glory when Christ *is revealed*... meaning when Jesus the Christ returns. (Read also Luke 19:11-27, Matt. 24:45-51, and 25:14-30.)

## **PART VIII – THE NEW NATION, THE CHURCH**

The nation of Israel rejected their King and rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, *the word of the kingdom*. We've already seen what Jesus said concerning this rejection—

Matthew 21:43

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." <sup>62</sup> (SEE FOOTNOTE 62)

This would also read "Therefore I say to you [Israel], the kingdom of the heavens will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation [the church] producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 19:23-24).

This new "nation" being offered participation in the kingdom of the heavens is the church (comprised mostly of Gentiles),<sup>63</sup> who because of their belief/faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 16:30-31) are considered to be *in Christ* (His body, Col. 1:18, 24) and therefore grafted into the family of Abraham and able to be recipients of the same promises (Jesus was from the line of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham) –

Galatians 3:7-14

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified

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<sup>62</sup> There is what appears to be a paradox concerning several truths of Scripture: First, the nation of Israel rejected their King and His message and crucified Him; therefore the kingdom of the heavens was taken from them. Second, Jesus Himself is the Passover Lamb, and everyone who believes on Him is saved—there is no other Way; therefore, *He had to die* (also reference Rev. 13:8). Third, *only Israel* could have killed the passover lambs/Passover Lamb because they were the only ones commanded by God to do so, according to their Law. Fourth, Gentiles were always going to be grafted in to the promises of Israel (through the death of the Lamb), because it was foretold from the beginning (commonly shown in "type" pictures like Adam's wife made from his side while asleep, Ruth [a Gentile] marrying Boaz the kinsman-redeemer, and Rahab [a Gentile] being saved from the destruction of Jericho, to name a few).

So the questions we may want to ask are: Why did God offer the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, knowing they wouldn't—and *couldn't*—receive it? Was it a legitimate offer? Why did He offer it when Jesus had to die as the Passover Lamb? And since He had to/was supposed to die, why does God hold Israel responsible for doing so? And on we may ponder...

Keeping in mind the omniscient, omnipotent 'not-bound-by-time' character of God the Father, read what God says about Himself in Isaiah 55:8-9, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" And in Isaiah 46:9-10, "Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure...'" And that is where we need to leave it.

<sup>63</sup> Roman 10:19-20 and 1 Peter 2:9-10 call the church "a nation." Also see Hebrews 3:1, "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." And remember, the word "church" in Greek is 'ekklesia,' which simply means "called out."

by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

#### Romans 4:13-17

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16 For this reason, it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, "A father of many nations I have made you") in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

#### Ephesians 2:1-22

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together (literally "seats us together") in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and

preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Now the church, the “body of Christ” (Col. 1:18, 21-28, Eph. 5:22-29) is to receive these same promises concerning possessing the gates of our *heavenly* enemies with God in our midst, bringing blessings to all nations, what we now more fully see as being *a fellow heir with Christ, glorified with Him in the kingdom of the heavens.*<sup>64</sup>

BUT, just as there were conditions placed on God’s people concerning obedience in order to receive the promises (obedience that required not only righteous living, but the offering of sacrifices for the sins they committed daily), the individuals of the church have conditions too. As clearly noted in Matthew 21:43, the new nation must *produce fruit* relative to the kingdom of the heavens in order to receive it; the same truth pictured for us in the parable of the sower—the one who hears the word of the kingdom in an honest and good heart, and *understands it*, will produce MUCH fruit: some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

(Remember, initial faith in God’s provision of death and shed blood—Jesus Christ—places one into the family of God and makes one a descendant of Abraham [through Christ], able to receive the promises concerning a kingdom and rest from our enemies. Initial faith in God makes spiritual perception and understanding possible. Initial faith in the price paid by Jesus on that cross brings us out of death and into life...and from that point we can *choose*—daily—to act like spiritual men or fleshly men. How we *behave* NOW determines the level of understanding and maturity we receive; how we behave NOW determines what we receive IN THE FUTURE.)

If we choose to live *fleshly*, then we are no better than that nation of Israel to whom the original offer of the kingdom was given. They were told to repent in order to receive it and *they didn’t*. And for us today, post-cross, our obedience requires not only righteous living, but the offering of a sacrifice for the sins we commit daily; but praise God there is One who already shed His blood as that sacrifice!

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<sup>64</sup> The idea of being “glorified” with Christ is hard for some to accept, most likely because we don’t properly understand what “glory” and “glorified” means, which is multi-faceted. On its simplest level it means “to be honored” or “spoken well of.” It also means “splendor” and is physically manifested as light. Read further on this in 1 Corinthians 15 (entire chapter), particularly 15:40-43, 2 Cor. 3:18, Rom. 5:1-2 & 8:12-25, Eph. 1:18, Col. 1:27 & 3:4, 1 Thess. 2:12, 2 Thess. 2:13-15, Heb. 2:10, 1 Pet. 1:7 & 5:1-4, John 1:14. Also word search “glory” and “glorified” (almost 450 uses in Scripture) and their Hebrew and Greek meanings, along with the root words of both. This is a whole Bible study in itself!

#### Hebrews 9:11-14

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal [literally “age-lasting”] redemption [for us]. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

#### 1 John 1:5-10

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us (literally, “keeps on cleansing us”) from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

*Through Christ’s own blood we are cleansed. Anytime, anywhere, we can avail ourselves of His provision by acknowledging our sins and confessing them (this is repentance); Jesus is faithful and righteous and *will forgive us*. That is His promise to us. But this must be a *continual* act on our part; when we sin, we go to our High Priest and ask for forgiveness. He forgives us and *cleanses us* from all unrighteousness (see also John 13:5-10, Eph. 5:25-30, James 4:8, and 2 Cor. 7:1).<sup>65</sup>*

Here are just a few of the solemn words recorded *for the church* (*redeemed* individuals), warning us that our behavior matters, and there will a just recompense for what we do—

#### Romans 8:12-14 [Written to the church]

So then, **brethren**, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

#### 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 [Written to the church]

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

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<sup>65</sup> Blood and water came out of Jesus’ side immediately after His death when He was pierced through by the soldier. That blood and water represents His continual forgiveness and cleansing (John 19:34).

homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:16-21 [Written to the church]

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 6:7-9 [Written to the church]

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal [literally "age-lasting"] life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 [Written to a redeemed man]

It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; 12 if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 [Written to the church]

For I do not want you to be unaware, **brethren**, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat, and stood up to play." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Hebrews 3:7-12 [Written to the church]

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that

generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 12:15-29 [Written to the church]

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

18 For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. 20 For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in [the] heaven[s], and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but the heaven." 27 And this expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

The letters of the New Testament were written to the members of the church...to those possessing the ability to understand spiritual things. We must understand that there is something *very real* and *very important* on offer that we have the choice to either *gain* or *lose*.

*The conditions are the same as they've always been:* faithful obedience to the word of God, walking in the Spirit not the flesh, a humble and contrite heart, pleasing to God. If we choose not to behave in such a way, God is clear that He will dole out a just recompense, just as He did with His own people Israel throughout their history. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of the heavens, they will not reign as fellow heirs with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom.

The big question to answer now is, *since it's our participation in the kingdom of the heavens that we stand to lose*, when exactly is that kingdom?

## **PART IX — LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE? PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE?**

Is the kingdom of *the heavens*, also called the kingdom of God, a *literal* kingdom, or is it a *figurative* one? Is it now, or is it future? Both? We've spent quite a bit of time on various aspects of these questions so I hope by now you know the answer as Scripture presents it. But since the church today is so confused about what the kingdom really is, we'll look at some more details.<sup>66</sup>

The kingdom of the heavens was "at hand" with Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt 3:2, 4:17, Mark 1:15). The kingdom was "among" them when Jesus taught and preached (Luke 17:21),<sup>67</sup> for their King was in their midst and He was ready to take His rightful position if the nation of Israel would heed His words and repent, thereby able to take *their* rightful position. They didn't repent and instead they crucified their King.

Did the kingdom then get instituted after Jesus' death and resurrection? Many members of the church believe that it did. They believe that we can now participate in that heavenly kingdom in a figurative, spiritual way if we allow Christ to rule as King in our hearts; if we don't allow that then we lose out on that *kingdom experience*. The concept of allowing Christ to rule our lives is a scriptural one, but the term "kingdom" is never used to describe it.

The expectation of the institution of the kingdom at Jesus' first coming was understood by His people to be a real, physical kingdom, in a real, physical land (not only the earthly one but the heavenly one as well) with real, physical relief and rest from all their enemies. The institution of the kingdom of *the heavens*— with Jesus as its King—was/is to remove Satan and his angels from their positions in the heavens, which is currently a real kingdom with Satan at its head, ruling over the earth. This is all very *real* and very *literal*.

The epistle writers, particularly Paul, still maintained that Satan was the ruler of this world/age (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 6:12) even *after* Christ went to sit at the Father's right hand. The church did not and *has not yet* received rest from their enemies (the enemies being the flesh, the devil, the world and death [1 Cor. 15:26, Matt. 13:39, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17]),

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<sup>66</sup> Not only will this help you "handle accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), but also to "always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:14-16).

<sup>67</sup> Luke 17:21 in the KJV makes an erroneous translation, "nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." The Greek word translated "within" is 'entos' (from the prepositional root 'en') and has numerous meanings, such as "among," "in," "before," "between," etc. Unfortunately many in the church are taught using *just this one verse* that the kingdom is an internal, spiritual kingdom that exists in their heart. A more fitting translation is "the kingdom of God is among you" and conveys more precisely the intent of the context, that the kingdom was being presented *among* them because it's King, as representative of that kingdom, was in their presence.

nor have any of us received crowns, nor are we sitting on a throne.<sup>68</sup> And clearly the author of Hebrews states that it is in *the world to come* that man will rule with Christ (Heb. 2:1-18; read also 1 Cor. 6:1-3).

Let's read a large portion from the Book of Hebrews, as the author uses specific language when comparing the church with the first generation of Israel, and as we know that first generation are "examples" for us, recorded "for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:1-13)—

Hebrews 3:7-4:9

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not **enter My rest**.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the

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<sup>68</sup> Using a Bible app like Kairos, software like PowerBible, or a website like blueletterbible.com (or a very thorough concordance book), do a New Testament word search for "crowns" and "crown." There is a "crown of rejoicing" (1 Thess. 2:19), a "crown of righteousness" that Jesus will give to not only Paul, but all who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8), a "crown of life" for those who faithfully endure temptation (James 1:12), a "crown of glory" for shepherds of the flock of God who serve this post faithfully (1 Pet. 1:4) and a "crown of life" again in Rev. 2:10 for those who endure and are faithful unto death. Read also 1 Cor. 9:1-27 where Paul talks about an "imperishable" crown as a reward for this race we're in, and he's worried about being *disqualified* from receiving it. **Crowns signify victory and positions of rulership**, exactly the same picture presented in the Scriptures. As for us sitting on a "throne," read Rev. 3:21 where Jesus says, "He who overcomes I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." The 12 apostles are promised they would sit on thrones in Matt. 19:28 when they ask Jesus what they will receive because they left everything and followed Him (they're looking to a reward), He says "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

A deeper search on the word "crown" will show that the Greek language has 2 different words for "crown": 'diadema' and 'stephanos.' A 'diadema' means "headband" or "band" and is associated with royalty and sovereignty, symbolizing kingly power and authority. 'Stephanos' means "wreath" or "garland" and is associated with victors in athletic games, as well as marriages and rewards for service.

Revelation 4:9-10 describes a scene where 24 elders cast their crowns before the throne of God; this is NOT depicting members of the church doing so. **We keep our crowns.** These 24 "elders" are angelic beings, representative of the 2/3 of the angels that did NOT rebel with Satan (12 is the number of government, 3 is the number of divine perfection; therefore 12 x 3 = 36, and 1/3 of 36 = 12 who rebelled with Satan, 2/3 = 24 who did not). Contextually at this point in Revelation we see the 24 angels relinquish their crowns willingly, because the church has just been judged in chapters 2 and 3 (at the Judgment Seat of Christ, which is yet future) and the *overcomers*—the faithful, obedient **sons** of God—have just been identified (the rebellious angels, the 12, will not willingly surrender their crowns; Jesus and His angels will take their crowns from them). This scene depicts the imminent change in rulers in the heavens.

wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not **enter His rest**, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4:1 Therefore, since **a promise remains of entering His rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come [literally, “may be seeming to come”] short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed [literally, “we who are believing”] **do enter that rest**, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not **enter My rest**,’” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place **of the seventh day** in this way: “And God rested **on the seventh day** from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not **enter My rest**.” 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it [literally, “some to enter it”], and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 **There remains therefore a rest** [literally, “Sabbath/seventh day rest”] **for the people of God**.

We need to *really* pay attention to this passage. This is *a warning after a warning after a warning*. It begins with a quote from Psalm 95 and the writer uses it to warn his brethren, the church, *not to harden their hearts as that first generation did*, just like David, the author of Psalm 95, was warning his audience, the nation of Israel. The author of Hebrews warns the church not to have an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God, *like the first generation of Israel did*. He says to encourage one another every day, so as not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. We are to be partakers of Christ **IF** we hold fast our assurance *firm until the end* (compare 1 Pet. 1:6-9). And again in 3:16-18 he uses that first generation as a warning; God was angry with them because they provoked Him and their bodies fell in the wilderness, never having been allowed to enter into their promised land because of their disobedience and unbelief (except for 2 people, Caleb and Joshua). God calls their promised land—the goal of why they were redeemed from Egypt—“**His rest**.”

And then in Hebrews 4:1 he warns *again*: A promise remains for us to enter *God’s rest*, so *let us fear* that we should come short of it. LET US FEAR that we should come short of it.<sup>69</sup> He goes on to say that we’ve had good news preached to us (good news of the heavenly kingdom), just like that first generation did (*good news about their earthly kingdom*) but they did not unite it *with faith*... they did not *believe* God. And again in 4:6 and 4:9 we’re told a Sabbath rest—a *seventh day rest* (the root word of “Sabbath” means “seven”)—remains for the people of God *so do not harden your hearts*. Perhaps we should pay attention to this multitude of warnings.

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<sup>69</sup> *God’s words, not mine*. Fearing the Lord is a necessary component of a righteous walk with Him, but we need to put “fear” in its proper context. Psalm 111:7-10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” and Proverbs 2:1-6, “Make you ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; 3 for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; 4 if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God.” Also reference Phlp. 2:12-13 and 2 Cor. 5:10-11 (and surrounding context), as well as 1 John 4:7-21. We will be studying this a bit further later.

So let's look at that second generation who DID get to enter "the rest" (for a short while, because staying in the land was conditioned upon their obedience), and learn more about it—

Deuteronomy 12:9-10

... for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. 10 When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security...

Numbers 33:50-56

Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan in to the land of Canaan, 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; 53 and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. 54 And you shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. 55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land in which you live. 56 And it shall come about that as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.'"

The place of "rest" for Israel was also called their inheritance, and it was to be realized in the land that God would give them (a real, physical land). This *rest* constituted a rest from all of their enemies as they possessed their gates (as long as they were obedient and drove them out as God had said), wherein a kingdom would be set up with God at the head.

So let's read about OUR inheritance, which is the "rest" that still remains for us—

Acts 26:15-18 (Paul recounting his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus)

And I said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

1 Peter 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in [the] heaven[s] for you.

Paul is sent by Jesus Himself to preach the gospel of the kingdom to not only the Jews but also the Gentiles, in order that he can teach them about receiving *forgiveness of sins* (gospel of the grace of God) and an *inheritance* (gospel of the kingdom). This inheritance (our land in which we will have rest from all of our enemies), Peter tells us, is reserved for us in *the heavens*. What else are we told about our inheritance, which is our rest?

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Colossians 3:23-25

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of that wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Matthew 5:10-12

[Jesus speaking] "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 11 Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. 12 Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in [the] heaven[s] is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Our inheritance, which is our rest, which is in the heavens reserved for us, is *the kingdom*, and it is a *reward*. The synonymous nature between the land, an inheritance and a reward was understood from the very beginning by Abraham, when he received the promises from God concerning his descendants –

Genesis 15:1-6

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." 2 And Abram said, "O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Since Thou has given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Abram's immediate response to God when told *his reward will be great* was to think about an heir of his household receiving it *as an inheritance* (because Abram had already been promised the land in Gen. 12:1-3). God then promised Him an heir, only not the heir who currently lived with him, but a child from his own body with his wife Sarah—both of whom were very old and (in human terms) unable to produce a child of their own. This of course would be Isaac, the son of promise.<sup>70</sup>

And since *our rest, our inheritance (our reward)* still remains for us, and it isn't here (it's in the heavens), then it must be future. Continuing -

1 Corinthians 15:50

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Revelation 22:12-13 (Depicting Jesus' return, yet future)

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Matthew 16:24-27

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his ~~life~~ [soul] will lose it, but whoever loses his ~~life~~ [soul] for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.* The context in 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 (please read it) is that we must have new *heavenly* bodies, given to us at the resurrection, in order to receive our inheritance, which is the kingdom. The inheritance is a *reward* and quite clearly we see that Jesus brings His reward with Him when He comes again.<sup>71</sup> So the kingdom is not now, nor do we own it now, nor is our rest now, nor do we have our reward of the inheritance now. It will all be realized at/after the time of the resurrection, which is *future*.

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<sup>70</sup> And not Ishmael, who was Abraham's firstborn son born with Hagar, Sarah's maid. Ishmael was produced without faith, therefore he is considered the "son of the flesh," whereas Isaac is the "son of promise." See Genesis chapter 16-17 & 21-22, and Galatians 4:21-31.

<sup>71</sup> Also read Matthew 24:45-51, 25:1-46, Mark 10:28-31, and Luke 19:11-27.

## **PART X — THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS, THE SABBATH REST**

Now is this literal kingdom of the heavens that is coming (a kingdom in which we *may* or *may not* realize our reward of the inheritance, depending on our behaviors) going to last forever? In other words, is this a temporary reward (or loss) or a permanent one?

If we go back to Hebrews 4:9 again we would see that there is a *Sabbath* rest that still remains for the people of God. We've established that "the rest" is the kingdom, the inheritance that is reserved in the heavens for us. It is in this kingdom that the faithful man/woman will rule as a fellow heir with Jesus (Rom. 8:17, Eph. 3:6). Let's continue to draw the connections between us and that first generation, just as the author of Hebrews has done. The Sabbath (meaning "rest," from a root word for "seven"), for them, was their *seventh* day of the week. It was the day that was set apart by God Himself to be kept holy, in which no one was to work. If anyone did work on the Sabbath, that person was to be killed, *cut off* from the rest of the nation. This was in recognition of the same pattern God set in His initial work in Genesis 1 (Heb. 4:4-5). He worked for six days and rested on the seventh, and He expected Israel to do the same.

It is no small matter that God begins His revelation to man with this pattern of 6 days of work followed by a 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest. If you take notice of Peter's wording in the following verse we can see something substantial that is almost always overlooked—

2 Peter 3:4-8

Know this first of all, that in **the last days** mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let [literally, "stop letting"] this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Concerning the promise of Jesus' coming, and the scoffers who mock it *in the last days*, we see that the *one fact* not to escape our notice (the church's notice) is that a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. This has to do with *the promise of Christ's coming*. Christ came the first time to institute the kingdom, was rejected, and will yet come a second time to *still yet institute His kingdom*. This is what the promise was, and is, all about. Only now we know that it is to the church, not the nation of Israel, that this kingdom *of the heavens* is promised.

And God says (through the pen of Peter) that "a day is as a thousand years." **This is not just a poetic way to say that God doesn't view time in the same way we do. Peter says "Stop letting this one fact escape your notice!"** (This sentence is exclamatory [needing a "!" at the end] as it is in the imperative mood in the Greek).

So let's look closely at this *one fact*. Once again we must start at the beginning to begin to understand it –

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created [Hebrew 'bara'] the heavens and the earth. 2 And [a 'wah' conjunctive] the earth was ['hayah'] formless ['tohuw'] and void ['bohuw'] and darkness was over the surface of the deep [literally "depths" or "abyss" as in *raging waters*]; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

When we compare these verses with another verse, we find what appears to be a contradiction—

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says the Lord, who created ['bara'] the heavens, who is God, who formed ['yatsar'] the earth and made ['asah'] it, who has established it ['kewn'], who did not create ['bara'] it a waste place ['tohuw'], but who formed ['yatsar'] it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is no other."

If we stick strictly with the English versions, we would read that in the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth, and the earth *was created* formless and void (literally "chaos" and "vacant"). But then we'd see in Isaiah that God didn't create the earth formless and void. So how do we understand this? *We read the Hebrew.*

The Hebrew word for "create," 'bara,' means to create something out of nothing. The Hebrew word for "formed," 'yatsar,' means to fashion something out of something else ('yatsar' is also the word for "potter"). The Hebrew word for "established it," 'kewn,' means to prepare, frame, make ready, or establish. The wah conjunctive— the "and" found at the beginning Gen. 1:2—is simply a conjunction noting that the sentence of verse 2 is linked to the sentence prior; it does not tell us *which conjunction it is*, context dictates which conjunction it is: and, but, now, when, then, or so. And finally that little Hebrew word for "was," 'hayah,' *is not always translated as "was."* It means "to be" or "to become" (the Hebrew interlinear translates the "was" as "became").

So how then do we read Genesis 1:1-2 and Isaiah 45:18, without contradictions, staying true to the original language? Like this—

Genesis 1:1-2

In beginning God created out of nothing the heavens and the earth. But the earth became a chaotic wasteland, a vacant place, and darkness was over the surface of the abyss of raging water; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says the Lord, who created out of nothing the heavens. He is God, who fashioned the earth from its previous form, He prepared it, made it ready and did not create the earth out of nothing as a chaotic wasteland (*it became that way*), but fashioned it in order for it to be inhabited by man and animals...

Note that the earth had become a chaotic wasteland of raging water, and darkness was *all around it*; there was no light found, only darkness, until God speaks on the first day “Let there be light,” and there was light. Since there was no light anywhere, we know that *the heavens were darkened too*. Then we read “God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day” (Gen. 1:3-5). On days two and three He works on fashioning the earth<sup>72</sup> but in day four He works on fashioning *the heavens* (Gen. 1:14-18). First He made (‘asah,’ meaning *to do* or *make*, never “create out of nothing”) “lights” (stars) in the cosmos as markers for time, then He made (‘asah’) “two great lights,” the greater to govern the day and the lesser to govern the night.

Both the earth and the heavens became ruined and *both needed restorative work* (see also Ex. 20:11, “For in six days the Lord *made* [‘asah’] the heavens and the earth...”).<sup>73</sup>

So what happened between Genesis 1:1 when God created *out of nothing* the heavens and the earth, and Genesis 1:2 when we find the earth had *become* a chaotic waste place full of darkness, with the heavens darkened as well? We’ve already covered it—

#### Ezekiel 28:11-19

Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, 12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, 13 you were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you (literally “will cast you”) as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you (literally “will destroy you”), O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you (literally “will cast you”) to the ground; I put you (literally “will put you”) before kings that they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire (literally “will bring fire”) from the midst of you; it has consumed you (literally “it will consume you”).

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<sup>72</sup> Notice how God begins fashioning the earth—He *separates the waters* that were already raging over the entirety of the globe; He does not create the water. He puts in an expanse (or “firmament”), moving waters above the expanse to separate it from the waters below. This is Day Two. On Day Three He moves the waters below into one place, letting dry land *appear* (or “*be seen*” which is what the Hebrew word for “appear” means); He doesn’t create the dry land.

<sup>73</sup> This was A LOT of information to cram into one small section so don’t be surprised if it doesn’t quite make sense yet. The more you start to understand about the rest of Scripture, the more each piece falls in place and concepts come together.

And I have turned you (literally “will turn you”) to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified (literally “will become terrified”), and you will be no more.””

As we looked at previously, Satan was in Eden in his perfect state, blameless, until he sinned and unrighteousness was found in him. *This caused his sanctuaries to be profaned*. What are his sanctuaries? The heavens and the earth. Satan was and still is the ruler and god of this world. He and his fallen angels are the powers of darkness/evil currently in positions of authority, ruling in the heavens over the earth. But he and they will one day be removed, when Jesus Himself, along with His fellow heirs, take their rightful positions in the kingdom of the heavens.<sup>74</sup>

So in beginning His revelation of Himself to man, God starts by telling us that the earth was a waste place and void and it was covered in water. He then moved over the darkness and He formed and shaped it, and He did this *in order for it to be inhabited by men*. This initial seven-day sequence in the beginning pages of Scripture is not the original creation of the earth, but rather a restoration account of God, through His Spirit, bringing to perfection that which was ruined.<sup>75</sup> And God took six days to do it, followed by a seventh day of rest—

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

God’s repetition here shows us *how important He views the seventh day of rest*. He in fact not only blessed it, but He *sanctified it*, made it holy and set apart. And we can see this same type of repetition when He mentions to Israel how *they* were to view this seventh day, that which in Hebrew is called “the Sabbath”—

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<sup>74</sup> A lot of confusion lies around the concept of Jesus’ kingship, for at the very start of the New Testament we read that He was born King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2). Because of this verse (and the many references to His kingdom), many people believe He took His position on His throne *as King* when He ascended to the Father. If this were true, Satan would no longer be ruling this world/age from his kingdom in the heavens. Additionally we read that Jesus is currently at the right hand of the Father *until His enemies are made His footstool*, as yet to sit on His own throne (Ps. 110:1, Heb. 1:3, 13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2, and Rev. 3:21). The truth of Scripture is that Jesus was born with the legal right to be King, was anointed at His baptism, but currently serves the office of *High Priest* at the right hand of the Father, *not King*. When Jesus returns, He will be “King of kings and Lord of lords” and will begin His reign as the Great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. The best way to understand how Jesus can be born King yet not start to reign until much later is to look at the *type picture* of King Saul and David. David was anointed as king of Israel when he was around 15 years old, while Saul was still the reigning king (though a rejected king). It wasn’t until 15 years later that David took his throne and began to reign, and this was only after Saul had been removed from the throne (by death) and David had gathered faithful men around him for positions in his kingdom. (Read 1 Samuel 15:1-16:13, 22:1-4, 31:1-13, 2 Samuel 1:1-2:7)

<sup>75</sup> This is not advocating for “the Gap Theory.” There are some similarities, but also *many* differences.

#### Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Now the pattern should be easy to see. God created the heavens and the earth in a perfect state, but Lucifer/Satan profaned himself and his sanctuaries (the heavens and the earth) and both became a ruined creation. God then *restored* the heavens and the earth, taking 6 days of work followed by a seventh day of rest.<sup>76</sup>

In exactly the same manner, God created *man* in a perfect state, but man profaned himself and his sanctuaries (the earth) and both became a ruined creation.<sup>77</sup> And just like the first restoration account in Genesis 1:2-2:3, God has seen fit to restore man and earth back to their pre-sin *perfect* form, and He will follow *the same pattern set forth at the beginning of His Word to do it*. God will work for six days and then He, along with man, will *rest* on the seventh day from this work.

Let's read again the passage from Peter with a couple more verses added—

#### 2 Peter 3:4-8

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and

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<sup>76</sup> God did not "restore" the rebellious angel Lucifer/Satan. He states clearly in Hebrews 2:14-16, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."

<sup>77</sup> When death and sin entered in due to Adam and the woman's transgression, the land was also affected, Genesis 3:17-18, "Then to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field..." Also note Romans 8:19-21, and our coverage of Col. 1:16-20.

the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Notice *why* the mockers say **Where in Scripture is the promise of Jesus' return?** In verse 5 we are told because it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and *the earth was formed out of water and by water*. Now most people think this is a reference to Noah's flood in Genesis chapters 7 and 8, but Peter starts by specifically saying "by the word of God ("And God said...") the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water...." He mentions *the heavens* AND the earth. And remember what we just learned about what the earth was like when it was a waste place—it was covered in water. *And God then formed it out of the water*. Also notice Peter immediately starts talking about *the next* destruction of **our present heavens and earth** (that which was the result of the six days of restoration in Gen. 1:2-2:3), that they are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment (the new heavens and new earth that replace our present ones are seen in Rev. 21:1, at the end of the kingdom [see also 1 Cor. 15:24-26]).

Peter says, "Beloved, concerning the promise of Jesus' return, this one fact is of utmost importance: one day = one thousand years, one thousand years = one day." And in saying this he is bringing our attention back to the initial seven days of restoration back in Genesis 1 (six days of work with a seventh day of rest); he's pointing to the amount of time God will take to restore mankind, while also pointing to the PROMISE of Jesus' return wherein *He will restore all things back to Himself*. The promise of His coming is back in Genesis 1:1-2:3—Jesus will return after the work of restoration is done, after 6 days/6,000 years.

One day = one thousand years.<sup>78</sup>

And we can have confirmation on how long this coming Sabbath rest (the **seventh DAY** rest), which is the coming kingdom, which is the inheritance (*which is a reward*), will last in the following verses that talk specifically about it—

Revelation 20:2-7

And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of

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<sup>78</sup> And this seventh day being the future kingdom of Jesus Christ also helps makes sense of all the times Scripture talks about the coming "day of the Lord," see Is. 2:12, 13:6-9, Jer. 46:10, Ezek. 13:5, 30:3, Joel 2:1, 11, 21, 3:14, Zec. 14:1, to name a few (it's also referenced as "that day"). But notably "the day of the Lord" is also mentioned as one of great wrath, which is a reference to the 7 year "time of Jacob's trouble" that precedes the time of peace ushered in afterwards by Jesus. God's wrath will come upon the Jewish people for their disobedience and obstinacy, against the Gentiles for their subjugation and treatment of the nation of Israel as well as their willful defiance of God, and against the beast and his false prophet for their parts in this, as recorded throughout Scripture (but in greatest detail in the Book of Revelation).

God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison.<sup>79</sup> (SEE FOOTNOTE 79)

Logic should have you asking, “If the kingdom to come is the *seventh day*, the 7<sup>th</sup> 1,000 year period of time, then does Scripture bear out the 6 days/6,000 years of work preceding the seventh?” Yes, over and over again. If you were to take the time to add up all of the genealogies throughout the Bible, we’d see that Jesus came the first time almost 4,000 years after the creation of Adam. And according to our own history, we know it’s been approximately 2,000 years since the time of Jesus Christ. So we’d see that it has been around 6,000 years to date since the creation of man. God has been working on restoring man *almost 6,000 years; we are nearing the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day*.

**Perhaps we shouldn’t be letting this one fact escape our notice!**

The kingdom of Jesus Christ will last 1,000 years and *then it will end*. The kingdom of the heavens, the time of reconciliation of things on the earth and things in the heavens, will end... yet the rule of God will continue. To repeat: the kingdom of Christ will last 1,000 years and *it will end* (as we see in 2 Pet. 3:10, the end is when “the present heavens pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up” and we see a new heavens and a new earth in Rev. 21:1), yet the rule of God will continue on afterwards. *Scripture is mostly silent* about what happens after the seventh day, because Scripture is primarily about *the seven days*, the seven thousands years of time allotted for the work of redemption and “the rest” that follows. Scripture is about *this* ruined earth and the corrupted heavens surrounding it, and Jesus’ primary role in the kingdom to come is to rule as King until He has

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<sup>79</sup> This passage is a bit difficult to understand in isolation here so again I’ll take liberties in summing it up to catch this point about the length of Christ’s kingdom. The book of Revelation depicts events occurring at the very end of this age/also the very beginning of the day of the Lord, “the Lord’s day,” Rev. 1:10), when the individuals comprising Christ’s church who are alive on earth are raptured into the heavens, along with all members of the church who have died since its inception (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Here they stand at the judgment seat of Christ (Rev. 2:1-3:22), receiving the recompense for the deeds done “while in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Cor. 3:11-15, Rom. 14:10). Those who are found to be overcomers (those who reckoned themselves dead, but alive in Christ; those who lived by the Spirit, not the flesh; those who lost their soul/life for Christ’s sake *presently* in order to find it *future*) enter into the kingdom and reign with Christ; those who are not overcomers do not. This begins the 7-year tribulation on earth, which is for the nation of Israel only; this is how God exacts their repentance, this is Daniel’s unfinished 70<sup>th</sup> “week” (literally, “seven,” Dan. 9:23-27), the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). We see God’s wrath poured out on the earth and then Christ coming to the earth, He deposes Satan and his 2 beasts (the “man of sin” and his false prophet) and takes His rightful place as King with His bride (His fellow-heirs) and His kingdom begins. Satan is bound for one thousand years, and then is released after the thousand years. Saints who had been beheaded (during the last half of the seven years, those who were not part of the church before the tribulation and therefore not raptured) because of the word of Christ, those who don’t worship the beast or his image, reign with Christ for one thousand years (as do overcomers of the church, depicted at the beginning of Revelation). The Kingdom of Christ, the Seventh Day, our Sabbath Rest = 1,000 years.

brought redemption and reconciliation and restoration to that which was cursed. We read about it from Paul—

1 Corinthians 15:24-26

...then comes the end, when He [Jesus] delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

How long must Jesus' reign last? Until He has put *all* of His enemies under His feet and has abolished death. And we see death finally being abolished at the end of the thousand years at the end of the Book of Revelation—

Revelation 20:7-15

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Death is destroyed at the end of the thousand years, *at the end of the Seventh Day*. And the next couple of verses in Chapter 20 describe the *new* heavens and the *new* earth, for the first ones *pass away*.<sup>80</sup> The end of the kingdom, which is the end of the 7,000 years of time of restoration and rest, will end with the destruction of the current heavens and earth. The last thousand years in which Christ rules His kingdom with a rod of iron is a set period of time, a time that is called "the age to come" throughout the Scriptures.

Whether we members of the body of Christ participate in that time with Christ *then* is determined by our behaviors and our mindset *now*. If we set our minds on things above and follow the Lord

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<sup>80</sup> Revelation 21:1-5 describes what happens with the new heavens and the new earth; the holy city of Jerusalem comes down out of heaven and God Himself will dwell among men; they shall be His people.

with all of heart, then we receive that reward. If we choose to follow our own selfish desires and quench the Spirit, then we will *not* receive the reward.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> You may be wondering that since we all make up “the body of Christ,” how can we, as members of the body, be separated from one another prior to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom? The answer is given in a type picture, in Genesis 2:20-24. The first man, Adam, needed a helper “suitable for him” because “it was not good for man to be alone”; God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and as he slept, He took one of his ribs and fashioned it into the woman. This union at the very beginning is why God considers marriage such a sacred thing: “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh...’” (2:23) and immediately after it is written “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (2:24). Paul writes in Ephesians 5:22-32 (and uses this same quote from Gen. 2:24, see also Romans 5:14) to show that Adam and the woman are a picture of Jesus and the church, which he calls a “mystery.” *Type* pictures, held in “mystery” until they’re progressively revealed later on, can teach us a lot about a topic (just like David and Saul being a picture of Jesus and Satan). Jesus **needs a helper** (since “it is not good for man to be alone” when rulership is in view, Gen. 2:18), and in order to find one suitable for Him the same process is used: He is put to sleep (dies), His side is opened up (blood and water come out when he is speared), and from this His bride is fashioned (blood is for forgiveness; water is for cleansing, which not all members of the body avail themselves of), and His bride is brought back to Him. Other type pictures in Scripture show us that the bride of the Son (see Rebekah and Isaac in Gen. 24, Jacob and Rachel/Leah in Gen. 28) comes from the Father’s family, but is not the whole family, and the bride of the Kinsman-Redeemer (see Boaz and Ruth in the book of Ruth) is the one who makes herself ready (see also Rev. 19:7-8).

So what happens *after* the seventh day? Who has a part in that? *Life* and *salvation* still comes into play regarding it (just as it does relative to the seventh day), and that **life** and that **salvation** is exactly what is meant by and given through *salvation by grace through faith*. This life and salvation is given to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30); *all those comprising the church already possess this life and salvation unto the ages*. It is a life and salvation that continues into the future ages, what the Scriptures call “forever and ever (which is literally translated “unto the ages of the ages”).” Please make sure you grasp what this is saying, which is essentially this: there is a life and a salvation pertaining to the coming Kingdom of Christ (having to do with the soul and body), and there is a separate life and salvation that pertains to the ages *after* the Kingdom of Christ (having to do with the spirit). However, the focus of Scripture is the seven-day structure, not the ages occurring after the Seventh Day (although they are of course important). God has structured His Word with a particular emphasis on His people keeping their eyes on the coming Seventh Day; *that is the focus*. All things move toward that Seventh Day, the Kingdom of Christ.

## **PART XI — ETERNAL**

I mentioned at the beginning of this study that along with learning what *the Scriptures* teach, we may also need to **unlearn** some of the erroneous doctrines we've been taught along the way. And one of the hurdles to overcome in order to gain a proper understanding of "the word of the kingdom" is realizing that while we are all reading and using the same English vocabulary, *not everyone is using the same "dictionary" (so to speak) when it comes to the definitions of biblical words and terms.* Many members of the church read the Bible and consciously (or unconsciously) ascribe meanings to words based on their own understanding of those words, whether it's come from their cultural upbringing, native language influences, and/or just plain incorrect teachings. On top of this, the English Bibles have done much to confuse people with their less-than-precise translations of the original languages. The definition of the word "eternal" is one such example, and establishing its true definition is one of the keys to understanding Scripture.

The first thing to understand is that the ancient Hebrew and Greek cultures didn't have a concept of "eternity" in the sense that Western, English-speakers do, and of course their languages reflect this. We can conceptualize the idea of *time unending* in the sense of *infinity* or *eternal*, whereas they didn't conceive of time as *never having an end*. Their concept of infinity/eternal was a series of ages, whereas each age has a **beginning** point and an **ending** point, with no pre-established length therein. Let's now delve into the Scriptures, using Scripture itself to define this word "eternal" for us.<sup>82</sup>

The word that is translated as "eternal" in the English translations of the New Testament is the Greek word 'aionios,' which is the adjective form of the Greek noun 'aion.' In order to understand the scriptural definition of "eternal" we will first need to define the noun form of this word.<sup>83</sup> An example of how to understand an adjective which has been made from a noun can be seen in the words *rock* (noun) and *rocky* (adjective). We can understand what *rocky* means by defining what a *rock* is. (*Hair* and *hairy* is another example.) Notice that as one moves from the noun form of the word to the adjective form, the *definition of the word does not change*; its grammatical usage does. To repeat, as we move from the noun form of the word to the adjective form, the definition of the word *does not change*; only its grammatical usage changes. Therefore, the adjective "eternal" must be the same as its noun form, "age." *Determine what 'aion' means and we'll determine what 'aionios' means.*

The Greek noun 'aion' is translated into our English Bibles as "age" and sometimes erroneously as "world." The more precise translation is "age," pertaining to *time*; the word "world" (Greek 'kosmos') more accurately pertains to an *orderly arrangement of things*. In Scripture when 'aion' is used as a noun it is most often used in its singular form with a definite article ("the"). The

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<sup>82</sup> We'll only be looking at the Greek, even though Hebrew follows much the same structure. Greek is easier to handle for our purposes here, and theologically speaking, the idea of "eternal life" is much more precisely spoken about during and after Jesus' first advent.

<sup>83</sup> As mentioned previously, the Strong's lexicon definitions are sometimes not altogether accurate. This is usually discovered when finding Scripture verses that *seemingly* contradict one another, and one is left with the challenge to find out *why*, knowing that God does not contradict Himself in His Word. The word *eternal* is one such case. Therefore it is necessary to build its definition scripturally, using God's own commentary and usage.

definite article is many times *not* translated into the English even though it may be present in the original language. (This was mentioned earlier: the inclusion of a definite article in the Greek language (and Hebrew) is intentional in order to stress a particular identity, e.g. *the* book as opposed to *a* book. Since many English versions drop the “the” that exists with specific nouns, we miss out on much of the intended emphasis.)

The following verses all use the noun ‘aion’ in its singular form with a definite article (unless indicated otherwise). It is extremely important that we study this word *according to the way Scripture defines it*.

#### 1 Corinthians 2:6-8

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age [literally, “this *the* age”], nor of the rulers of this age [“this *the* age”], who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age [“this *the* age”] has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory...

Verse 7 tells us that there was a *before* the ages (*ages* – plural). Then verse 8 speaks of this *current* age, which is distinct from the previous ages. Therefore, *this age had a beginning*. Verse 6 tells us that the *rulers of this age* are passing away (and we’ve already studied who those rulers are). Let’s look further and pay particular attention to how “this *the* age” is described—

#### Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age [“this *the* age”], against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

#### 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age [“this *the* age”] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

#### Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world [“this *the* age”], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

This age *had a beginning* and this age is currently being ruled by spiritual forces *of wickedness* from the heavens; *Satan is the god of this age*. Therefore, we are not to pattern ourselves after this age. This age, our current age, began in Genesis 1:2b when God began the seven days of restoration & rest in Genesis, wherein we find the heavens and the earth being restored and man being created to replace the fallen ruler Satan, who was at that time (and continues to be) *wicked*. This age began around 6,000 years ago, wherein at the beginning we see Adam and the woman’s act of disobedience, which resulted in the entrance of *sin* and *death*.

This age also clearly has an ending—

Matthew 13:36-43

Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” 37 And He answered and said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age [“this *the* age”]. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will cast them in to the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

This age will end, and it ends *with a harvest*. The harvest at the end of this age happens just prior to the institution of the kingdom of the heavens, which Scripture calls “the age to come” —

Ephesians 1:18-21

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in [“among”] the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power towards us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Matthew 12:31-32

“Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32 And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”

Matthew 13:40-43 (Remember this from earlier in the study)

[Jesus speaking, explaining the parable of the wheat and tares] “Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

A very simple, clear, and *scriptural* definition of age is “a long period of time with a beginning and an end.” In no way does Scripture present the word “age,” *specifically this age or the next* (the next age is the 1,000 year reign of Christ in His kingdom), as infinite time unending.

That brings us to the Greek word 'aionios,' which is most often translated in our Bibles as "eternal," but sometimes is translated as "everlasting." This word is the adjective form of the noun 'aion.' Let's remember the definition we've just learned of the noun 'aion' – it should literally be understood as *a long period of time with a beginning and an end*. AND REMEMBER, as we go from the noun form of a word to the adjective form, *the definition of the word does not change*, its grammatical usage does (e.g. rock vs. rocky). This next passage is most helpful, as it contains both the noun 'aion' and the adjective 'aionios' in the same sentence –

Luke 18:29-30

And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times as much at this time [literally, "this the era"] and in the age ['aion'] to come, eternal ['aionios'] life."

Verse 30 *should* be translated "...and in the age to come, age-lasting life [or life for the age]." This Biblical phrase, "eternal life" is clearly ***not exclusively*** the idea of life *forever and ever*, as so many think. In the preceding context its meaning is clear – "eternal life" is **life in the age to come**, or more aptly, *age-lasting life* in the kingdom age which is coming.<sup>84</sup>

Let's continue with a few more instances in which the phrase "eternal life" is used –

Galatians 6:8

For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal ['aionios'] life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.

1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal ['aionios'] life to which you were called...

Luke 18:18

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal ['aionios'] life?"

Romans 2:5-8

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal ['aionios'] life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but

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<sup>84</sup> To reiterate, "life" and "death" are important words to understand, so let's review what we studied previously. "Life" means fellowship/togetherness with God and "death" means separation from God. Context dictates who, what, when, where, and how. This is exactly as we've seen already concerning being a "fellow heir" with Christ, glorified with Him after the events at the Judgment Seat (as well as NOT being a fellow heir)... age-lasting LIFE means fellowship and togetherness with Jesus in His kingdom (the AGE to come) as His fellow-heir, DEATH means separation from Christ in His kingdom, not being glorified with Him (see also Rom. 6:23, 8:13, Rev. 2:11, 20:6).

to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath...

Titus 3:7

...that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal ['aionios'] life.

Notice from the first four verses that 'aionios' life ("eternal life") is clearly being spoken of in terms of *doing work* to get it, and the receiving of this *life for the age* is future, for "in due time" we shall reap it from the Spirit, in "the day of wrath and revelation" (the Judgment Seat of Christ). However, we will receive "eternal life" *only if* we sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh, and only if we continue in "doing good" ...which makes 'aionios' life *conditional*. Moreover, we, the church (to whom the epistles are written), must *take hold* of this 'aionios' life.

Since these verses are saying that 'aionios'/age-lasting life is *conditional*, based on one's actions, *and the ones being addressed here are already members of the body of Christ*, and "eternal life" is for the age to come, we must conclude that the attaining of *age-lasting/"eternal"* life is subsequent to one becoming "saved." We can also clearly see in Titus 3:7 that those who hope for eternal life are those who have already been "justified by His grace." Notice that "eternal life" is spoken of as a *hope*, **not a certainty**. It is the *calling* of the church (See also Matt. 20:1-16, 22:1-14, 1 Cor. 1:21-29, Eph. 1:18, 4:1-4, 2 Thess. 1:5-11, 2 Tim. 1:9, and Heb. 3:1).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> The idea behind the word "hope" is important to grasp. A "hope" is not a certainty. As Paul says in Galatians 5:5, "For we...are waiting for the hope of righteousness," and in Romans 8:24-25, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." Also Ephesians 1:18 and 4:4, "...that you may know what is the hope of His calling..." and "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling." See also 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied" and Romans 5:1-2, "...and we exult in the hope of the glory of God." We HOPE for righteousness, we HOPE to be glorified, we HOPE to be found faithful and enter into the coming kingdom, and we HOPE for "eternal"/age-lasting life; it is not guaranteed. *The promise* that the faithful followers of Christ will rule with Him in the kingdom is guaranteed, but our *individual participation* in it is not. We are called with this HOPE, and we HOPE to be chosen out of the called. Read also Acts 26:6, Rom. 15:4, Col. 1:5, 23-27, 1 Thess. 5:8, Titus 1:2, Heb. 3:6, 6:9-20, 1 Pet. 1:3, 3:15 and 1 John 1:2-3.

The following Scripture passage shows clearly that the biblical phrase “eternal life” does not mean *forever and ever*.<sup>86</sup> In the following account we will see the synonymous nature between “eternal [‘aionios’] life,” “the kingdom of the heavens,” and *salvation*. Let’s look at Matthew’s account of the rich, young ruler –

Matthew 19:16-29

And behold, one came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I **do**, that I may obtain eternal life?” [Mark’s version uses the phrase, “inherit eternal life.”] 17 And He said to him, “Why are you asking me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

18 He said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; 19 honor your father and mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” 21 Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property. 23 And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

25 And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, “Then who can be saved?” 26 And looking upon them Jesus said to them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” 27 Then Peter answered and said to Him “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?”

28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

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<sup>86</sup> There’s another particular Greek phrasing using the word ‘aion,’ which is ‘eis ton aion,’ which literally means “unto (or *with respect to*) THE age” (meaning **the age to come**, the kingdom of the heavens). Our English bibles translate this phrase as “forever” or “always,” and in the negative, “never.” In John 6:51, “I am the living bread with came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever...” “Forever” is actually the aforementioned phrase, so this should read, “If anyone eats of this bread, he will live with respect to the age...” This is also seen in John 6:58, 8:35, Heb. 6:20 and 7:17 (plus many others). Another example is John 8:51 which reads, “If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.” This should literally read, “If anyone keeps My word he will not taste death with respect to the age.” Same with John 8:52, 10:28, and 11:26, to name a few. This is so important to grasp because we almost always instinctively think of the words “forever” and “never” to be *infinite* in scope, not “with respect to the age (*which has a beginning and an end*)” as they actually mean in the aforementioned verses.

Also to note, the English phrase “forever and ever” consists of the Greek words ‘eis/eios’ followed by the word ‘tous’ (used with repeating definite articles), followed by the plural noun *aionas* (plural form of the noun ‘aion’ with a definite article). This phrase literally reads, “unto these the ages of the ages.” It is used in Hebrews 13:21 and 1 Peter 4:11, for example. So the New Testament writers *did have a way* of expressing the idea of “indefinitely” and “infinite” (*time unending*) if they wanted to.

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mothers or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life." (In Mark 10:30 we read this verse this way: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world [literally, "the age"] to come eternal ['aionios'] life.")

*"Obtaining eternal life"* is used in the same way as *"entering into life,"* which is used in the same way as *"inheriting eternal life"* (and remember what we've learned about our inheritance). This passage gives us the clearest and most complete meaning of what obtaining "eternal life" actually means scripturally; it means *entering the kingdom of the heavens* (also called "*the kingdom of God*"), being *saved* (this is referencing the salvation of the soul), being *complete*, receiving a *reward* (sitting on a throne), and *realizing the inheritance IN THE AGE TO COME*. All things which come after we are initially saved (our spirit) and after the Judgment Seat of Christ, which occurs at the end of this age.<sup>87</sup>

Read that last paragraph again. This important distinction needs to be repeated OFTEN because the correct definition of "eternal life" is the most common misunderstanding in the church today. Most everyone thinks Scripture uses the term to mean life with Jesus/God forever and ever, unto infinity (*never to be separated*), given to us the moment we first believe in Jesus. YES, we receive LIFE when we first believe, **but this only impacts one part of our three parts**, and it is NOT called "eternal/age-lasting life." It is called "being saved," being "made alive," being a "new creation" in Christ, being "justified" by faith, and "begotten again." *We must correct this error if we want to understand the strong meat of the Word.* In this passage from Matthew, Jesus said that this young man *must work* in order to inherit/obtain "eternal life." Scripture clearly teaches that a person's own works have no place with the free gift of salvation by grace through faith – no place at all. The free gift of salvation—which impacts our spirit—is based on the work of Jesus Christ, and it is *given freely by grace, through faith*, to those who believe (Acts 16:30, Eph. 2:8-9). This LIFE, given to our spirit, SAVES us from the death we were born into. If, at this point, one was to view the phrase "eternal life" in the broadest sense of *being saved from hell for eternity*, then there would be a contradiction because Jesus (and in various passages elsewhere) is telling the rich man that *he has to do something* to receive it. And, as we know, contradictions do not exist in God's Word. "Eternal life" is not life for eternity; it is life for the age to come. "Eternal life" has to do with the salvation of the soul (and body), not the salvation of the spirit. "Eternal life" is based on faithful WORKS, being saved by grace through faith is NOT.

This is why there are so many varying sects of Christianity, opposite ends of the spectrum like Calvinism and Arminianism. The Calvinist camp says "Once saved you *will* persevere, otherwise

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<sup>87</sup> The question "Who can be saved?" is not referencing one's initial salvation as seen in Ephesians 2:8-9 (because the rich, young ruler – as well as the disciples – would have already possessed *spiritual life*; the young man seeks Jesus out to be **taught spiritual things**). This is referencing the **goal/end of our faith** that Peter talks about in 1 Peter 1:1-12, the salvation of the soul. Read also Hebrews 1:14, 5:9, 9:26, 10:35-11:3, James 1:21, 2 Timothy 2:8-13, and Matthew 16:24-27 (remember, the word "life" in v. 25 is actually "soul"). And for further commentary on the word "complete" in verse 21, read James 1:2-4, Col. 1:24-29, and 1 Thess. 5:23, referring back to what we studied concerning this last verse.

you weren't saved to begin with" and the Arminian camp says "Once saved, if you don't persevere you will lose your salvation." Both camps, and everything in-between, look too narrowly at the word "salvation"; they don't understand the definition of "eternal life"; they don't understand the 3 parts of man; they don't understand the 7-day structure of Scripture regarding man's restoration. Scripture appears to contradict itself because it says salvation is NOT OF WORKS, but it also says salvation is BY WORKS ONLY. Once a person rightly divides the Word, and understands that *initial* salvation of the spirit (which imparts LIFE to the spirit, which was dead beforehand) happens immediately upon belief in God's provision (for us post-cross that is Jesus, prior to that it was the death and shed blood of the passover lambs) and is forever and ever, and then understands that the future *salvation* of the soul is based on faithful obedience (WORKS done in faith) and is judged yet future, with positive and negative *temporary* recompenses, then all confusion fades.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> The "working out of [our] salvation in fear and trembling" that Paul talks about in Philippians 2:12 is about us working out of the salvation of the soul, a future salvation based on faithful obedience to the Word of God, a salvation that not every member of the church will receive. Most of Christendom calls this idea of "working out your salvation" *sanctification*, which literally means "being made holy." With most of the church there is no resistance to using the word "sanctification," but once you mention "salvation of the soul," "Judgment seat of Christ," and "negative recompense" you'll be hit with much opposition, sometimes even hostility. Unfortunately some translators have eradicated the phrase "salvation of the soul" from many modern English Bibles, making it a foreign concept to many.

## **PART XII — REPENT AND BEAR FRUIT**

Let's read again John the Baptist's and Jesus' initial message to the nation of Israel—

Matthew 3:1-2, 8

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent for the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand." ... 8 "Therefore **bear fruits worthy of repentance...**"

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is at hand."

Mark 1:14-15

And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

As we've been studying, this message of *repentance because the kingdom of the heavens is at hand* is still to be preached to **the church** today. "Repent"/"repentance" are the words 'nacham' (verb) and 'nocham' (noun) in Hebrew and 'metanoeo' (verb) and 'metanoia' (noun) in Greek. In both languages the word simply means "to reconsider," "to change your decision," and/or "to change your mind."<sup>89</sup> *It is not specific to any particular subject or topic about which your mind must be changed*; it just means "change your mind." Too often in Christianity today the word "repent" is used *solely* when referencing one's initial salvation, i.e. "you must repent and believe that Jesus died for your sins."<sup>90</sup> However, as with the nation of Israel at Jesus' first advent—who were a **saved** people—they needed to *change their minds regarding their behaviors* and then believe that Jesus was the One they were waiting for. Likewise, individuals in the church today—a **saved** group of people—need to *change their minds concerning their behaviors*, and then

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<sup>89</sup> 'Nacham' in Hebrew is also translated as "comfort," meaning when one person consoles another to help change their perspective and/or emotion regarding something. The same idea as *repent*.

<sup>90</sup> Needing to repent *prior* to initial salvation potentially presents a problem, theologically speaking. This is a debatable subject, as some view repentance as *a work*, and our own *works* have no place at all in our initial salvation. Others view repentance as simply a thought process, not a work, and would of necessity come before someone initially places faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, thereby becoming "saved" spiritually (i.e. understanding you were born dead in trespasses and sins and need a Savior and then believing that Jesus died in your stead, which would be a "change in mindset"). Those of the former position could reference Mark 1:14-15, "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel," since this verse is presenting the "good news" **of the kingdom**, which has nothing to do with initial salvation (hearing "the word of the kingdom" (Mark 13:19) comes AFTER initial salvation). And of course Acts 16:30-31 says nothing of repentance needed before "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ" and then being "saved." Those of the latter position could reference Acts 26:19-20, which appears contextually to present a series of actions necessary by *Gentiles*, those "dead in trespasses and sins," to whom Paul first brought the "good news" of the grace of God: "repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance." I am not persuaded one is more accurate than the other and currently hold no firm position on the matter.

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the One seeking many sons to bring to glory, to be fellow heirs with Him when He returns with His kingdom—a *kingdom which is future*.

Repentance needs to be a part of our life here in this body of death, in this fallen world. As we Christians walk this journey of faith, desiring to walk after the Spirit and not the flesh, when we stray and start to walk according to the flesh we should be convicted by the Holy Spirit (through the Word) when our fleshly behaviors don't line up with what the Word of God says. We would hopefully **change our minds about this** when faced with that conviction. When this happens, we are told to then *confess our sins*, as John writes (and as we've previously studied)—

1 John 1:5-10

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us (literally, “keeps on cleansing us”) from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

And as Jesus says to the churches, recorded in Revelation, as a warning to us today—

Revelation 2:14-16

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 **Repent**, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”

Revelation 2:19-22

“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not **repent**. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they **repent** of their deeds.”

Revelation 3:2-3

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and **repent**. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

#### Revelation 3:17-22

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

This is why it is of utmost importance to study, learn, and KNOW the Word of God and what it says. It is only by that measure we can truly know what God desires from each one of us. (For additional verses relating to "repenting" and "repentance," read Ex. 13:7, 1 Kings 8:47, Ezek. 14:6, Ps. 110:4 [corresponding with Heb. 7:21], Acts 2:38, 17:30, 2 Cor. 7:8, Luke 5:32 and 24:47, to name a few.)

Along with repentance, Scripture tells us it is necessary to "produce fruit" in order to inherit the kingdom; this is also called "works," being faithful, being obedient, *sanctification*, and *believing to the saving of the soul*. Let's review a few passages we've already looked at regarding this, as well as a few others –

#### Matthew 13:18-23

[Jesus speaking] "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears **the word of the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 20 The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

#### Matthew 21:18-19

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and **found nothing on it but leaves**, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. [Jesus came seeking "fruit" from the nation of Israel; receiving none, He removed His offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel. This is also verbalized in the following verse.]

Matthew 21:43

"Therefore I say to you [Israel], the kingdom of God [synonymous with "the kingdom of the heavens"] will be taken away from you [Israel], and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it."

Galatians 5:19-23

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Acts 26:19-20

[Paul speaking] "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

So what does "producing fruit" (*works, faithful obedience*) look like in practice? First, the source and means of fruit production—

2 Timothy 3:16-17

**All Scripture** is given by inspiration of God (literally "God-breathed," also "God-Spirit"), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

John 16:12-15

[Jesus speaking] "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, **the Spirit of truth**, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

**ALL** Scripture is profitable for *doctrine* ("teachings," both milk and solid food), for reproof ("evidence"), correction ("to be straightened out"), and instruction ("chastening") in righteousness. All Scripture is given so that *the man of God* (that's us, individuals in *the church*) might be *complete* and **thoroughly equipped** for EVERY GOOD WORK.

All we need is Scripture (the **Word** of God, His very **breath**), and God's Spirit – *the Spirit of truth* – to guide us. The Holy Spirit (Who dwells in us) will take of what is God's – His truth – and *declare it to us*.

### Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast [*our initial salvation*]. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, **which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**<sup>91</sup> (SEE FOOTNOTE 91)

We are created in Christ Jesus (our new birth, in Christ) *for good works*, and God clearly states that **He prepares** those works for us; all we have to do is walk in them. Further commentary on what “good works” looks like, and why we are to do them—

### Matthew 5:2-16

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in [the] heaven[s], for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and **glorify your Father** in heaven.

### 1 Timothy 6:1-19

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. 3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings

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<sup>91</sup> For a companion passage to this (in what is a type/anti-type structure), read Ruth 2:1-23. Ruth gleanes in Boaz's grain fields, following after the reapers and picking up the ears of grains left behind. Boaz specifically tells his servants to *purposely* pull out grains from the bundles and leave them for her. She then “beats out what she has gleaned.” Ruth asks Boaz why he favors her and he says, “And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal ["age-lasting"] life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality [literally, "incorruption"], dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. 17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal ["age-lasting"] life.

Hebrews 10:19 -25

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We are to do good works *for a reason*. Other men are to see them and glorify God. Being rich in good works stores up a good foundation in order to *lay hold of* eternal (age-lasting) life. Fleeing from the works of the flesh and embracing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness...this helps us fight the good fight of the faith and lay hold of our calling, which is eternal (age-lasting) life. And we are to stir up one another to good works, exhorting each other, so much more so as we see the Day approaching. And that Day is approaching quickly.

#### Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men [literally, “the saving grace of God made its advent to all men”] 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

#### Titus 3:1-8

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal [“age-lasting”] life. 8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

This passage tells us that *the saving grace of God* (“by grace [we] have been saved through faith; and that not of [ourselves], it is the gift of God...Eph. 2:8) **teaches us** that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts in this present age. We are to LOOK FOR THE BLESSED HOPE and the appearing of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who is our Savior, who gave Himself for us, redeemed us in order to purify us (for that Day ahead) that we would be a special people *zealous for good works*. (Are you zealous for good works? You should be!)

#### James 2:20-22

But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless [literally, “dead”]? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected...

#### James 1:21-22

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

#### 1 Peter 3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation

ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

#### Colossians 3:23-25

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

#### Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who ["diligently"] seek him.

Our good works we do **MUST** be done in accordance with what we believe (in accordance with *faith*), and what we believe must line up with God's Word, which needs to be implanted in us. We need to do these works *heartily, as to the Lord*, knowing what He plans to give us if we prove faithful to the end. And if we are faithful to the end, we will receive the salvation of our souls (the saving of our life in the age to come, Matt. 16:24-27, Luke 18:29-30), which is the *very goal of our faith*.<sup>92</sup>

The following passage from John is an excellent summation of what this looks like—

#### John 15:1-17

[Jesus speaking] "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's

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<sup>92</sup> Our *works* are also our wedding garment, as seen in Rev. 19:7-8, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." It is only those who avail themselves of God's provisions and produce righteous acts (by the Spirit, not the flesh) who will be part of the Bride of Christ (read also Matt. 22:1-14 and 25:1-12), ruling together with Him in His kingdom.

commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.”

**Abide** means to *stay, continue, dwell, endure, be present, to remain*. Abide in Jesus; let His words abide in you. Abide in His love as He abides in the Father’s love. Jesus wants this for us, that His joy may remain in us and our joy may be made full. He chose us and appointed us to bear much fruit, and that our fruit should remain, that whatever we ask the Father in Jesus’ name He will give us. And what will we ask for, once our joy is made full? We’ll ask for our inheritance, our reward, our place next to Him in His kingdom to come. And we will be given it.

If anyone, saved or not, attempts to work towards the salvation of their soul *on their own*, they will be rejected.<sup>93</sup> We are fallen creatures that can only regain fellowship with God by the work of God Himself. We can do nothing. Yet, we are to choose God. And once we choose God, we are to *continue to choose God*. We are to live a life centered on God rather than centered on our self. This is how we live life by the Spirit—we cooperate with God and allow Him to lead us and guide us and change us (and cleanse us—that’s what confession is for). This path will lead us down the road of good works, which God has prepared for us beforehand.

We are to demonstrate our faith by our works; we are to be doers of the Word and not hearers *only* (Rom 2:13, James 1:22). We are to put our faith (*our beliefs*) into action which will result in our faith being brought to its goal. The goal of our faith is the salvation of our soul/life (1 Pet 1:9). If we do this, live our lives faithfully obedient to the Spirit of God (who is the Word of God), then we will find ourselves rewarded.<sup>94</sup>

If we do not choose to cooperate with God, but choose instead to separate our lives from our Creator, He will allow us to do that, though He will never stop trying to get us to see the error of

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<sup>93</sup> This would be *religion*, man’s *traditions*, “to-do” *lists*... all things that have the danger of being done out of the flesh and not by the Spirit. Legalism is the trap that so many fall into, thinking if they just do enough “good” it will cancel out the “bad,” giving them black in their ledger at the end. THIS IS NOT HOW GOD WORKS. We are to die to our *self*, to “I will,” and instead live to Christ, to “God wills.” No one person can tell another person exactly what their Spirit-led walk looks like; Scripture can, and does. Implant His Word within you so that you have the instruction book on how to please God by being faithful; and by pleasing God, you will receive the reward He has promised to those who love Him.

<sup>94</sup> This is what the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30 depicts, when the faithful servant hears “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” And in the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-27, the faithful servants are given authority over cities as a reward. Note that both of these parables show that the recompenses occur *after* the Master has commanded his servants to “do business” while he is gone AND *after* he has returned from a long absence and called them to himself to give an account.

our ways. He never left Israel when they strayed; He continued to pursue and entice them back to Himself. If we never respond, then it is us who has left God; He has not left us. And as Israel experienced dire consequences for their disobedience, so God warns us of the same. We would lose our inheritance, which is the *rest* in the land, which is the opportunity to rule with Jesus in the kingdom which is to come.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> We will show more about what this loss of inheritance looks like in the next Part.

### **PART XIII — THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

Romans 14:10-12

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ**. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror [literally "fear"] of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Very little time and thought is given to the topic of the Judgment Seat of Christ nowadays, even though Scripture explicitly tells us, *the church*, we will ALL have to stand before it one day. We will all have to stand before Jesus *as our Judge*; we will all have to give an account of *everything* we have done in the body, **whether good or bad**, and we will all be given a recompense accordingly. This is a somber truth, not to be taken lightly.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

We must lay the proper foundation, which is Jesus Christ, and build upon it accordingly—this is what constitutes *works*. Our works will be tested *by fire*, and our works will become clear, for **the Day** will declare it. If our works endure through the fire (gold, silver, precious stones), we receive a reward; if our works are burned (wood, hay, straw), we will suffer loss, but we *will not be destroyed*. As clearly seen in the previous passage, the one whose works are burned will suffer loss, but *they themselves will be saved*, yet so as through fire.<sup>96</sup>

Read through the following passages, taking careful note of what is being said. These verses are written for *all members of the church*, both then and now. We have not yet come to the final judgment so we still have time to pay very close attention to what God has said, and how serious He views this matter. It should grieve us that the majority of the church does not understand nor comprehend the gravity of what awaits us all.

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<sup>96</sup> This again is a reference to the 3 parts of man: spirit, soul, and body; one can possess salvation relative to the spirit (our initial salvation/regeneration, that which we received as a free gift when we first believed; this can never be undone, as the price has been paid by Jesus, God Himself—and judgment has passed relative to it) **but yet still lose their soul/life in the age to come** (that which Scripture calls "eternal/age-lasting life" and "the salvation of the soul"). They are "saved" yet so as through fire, but will indeed *suffer loss*.

#### Romans 2:1-11

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal ["age-lasting"] life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality [literally, "incorruption"]; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.

#### Galatians 6:3-9

For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting ["age-lasting"] life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

#### Colossians 3:23-25

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

#### 1 Peter 1:17-19

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

#### John 15:1-6

[Jesus speaking] "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the

branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 5:22, 27

[Jesus speaking] "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son...and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

2 Timothy 4:1

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

Hebrews 10:30-31

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

1 Peter 4:17-19

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

[Note: We get the clearest view of the judgment seat of Christ presented to us in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the final book of the Bible that deals with the closing of this present age and the beginning of the age to come, the "day of the Lord," the 1,000-year reign of Christ with His fellow-heirs (as well as a glimpse into what occurs after the Millennium Kingdom). The Greek word for "revelation" is 'apokolupsis,' which means *to unveil, to cast light on, to manifest, to open up*. This final book in God's Word is the unveiling and opening up of Jesus Christ, who is Himself "the Word made flesh" (John 1:1-14).

The Judgment Seat is depicted in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.<sup>97</sup> Jesus *commends* and *condemns* the seven churches for their

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<sup>97</sup> Read Chapters 2 and 3. Rev. 1:9-10 sets the time frame for the scene that follows: "I [John] was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day..." which literally translated should read, "I [John] became in spirit in the Lord's Day," the Lord's Day being the future day of the Lord as previously discussed, and John becoming "in spirit" IN that day shows him translated (as Paul was, 2 Cor. 12:2-4) to the highest heavens to witness that which the Lord wants to show him (see Rev. 4:1ff, as John looks around and sees God's throne and all that surrounds it). The scene in Rev. 1:12-20 shows Jesus, girded about the chest, symbolizing His position as Judge; it also shows Him standing amongst "seven" lampstands, which are the seven churches, symbolizing the complete church in His presence (seven is the number of completeness, or wholeness, of that which is in view). There is also a deeper spiritual meaning in the sequence of the 7 churches, and that is a prophetic (although now for us, also historic) picture of the growth and character of the church during this present age (exactly as shown in the Matthew 13 parables, which we will study in the next Part).

**works.** These words are extremely important for each individual making up the church, and are to be taken *personally*, as we will all find ourselves at this very place, receiving either commendations or condemnations from our Judge.]

The above verses—*written to members of the church*—really don't need any additional commentary. In the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, we will all stand before Him—at the Judgment Seat of Christ—and be judged according to *everything* we have done in this body, both good and bad. Do not be deceived; God will not be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap. *For there is no partiality with God.*

And because we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, Paul admonishes us to have a proper “*fear of the Lord*” (2 Cor. 5:11), for “it is a *fearful* thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). We briefly looked at how to view “*fear*” earlier, as a necessary component of a righteous walk with Him, but we need to put “*fear*” in its proper context.<sup>98</sup> This passage from 1 John can help put *fear* and *love* in their proper place—

1 John 4:16-18

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness [literally, “confidence”] in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment (literally, “punishment”). But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

According to John, if we the church (individually) abide in God's love, then we are abiding in God, for God is love; therefore, *we can have confidence in that day of judgment* as long as we abide in love. This is exactly the same idea in John 15 where we are told to “abide” in Christ and we will be “abiding in God's love,” thereby producing much fruit. But also according to John chapter 15, if we *do not* abide in Christ, we will be thrown out and “burned” (John 15:6); in other words, if we are not abiding, we would then have fear in that day of judgment (1 John 4:17). This is also the same idea as being told that there is “no condemnation for those who follow after the Spirit and not the flesh” (Rom. 8:1), meaning, there IS condemnation for those who follow after the flesh and not the Spirit. This is further elaborated on in this seeming paradox in 1 John 3:9 and 1 John 1:8—

1 John 3:9

No one who is born of God [literally “brought forth from God”] practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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<sup>98</sup> One of the hardest doctrines for the church today to accept is the idea of having a “*fear*” of the Lord. We've all been taught myopically for so long about God's perfect love that it's very difficult for some to wrap their minds around the other side of His perfect love *and justice*, which is His wrath.

Do we sin, or not? Should we fear, or not? Can we have confidence, or not?

Per these Scriptures, all of these scenarios are *conditional*. IF we abide in God/Christ/love, THEN we are perfect—"brought forth from God"—and THEN we will not sin. IF we abide, we need not fear. **However**, we know that we will still sin and we will fall out of that perfect "abiding" because we are imperfect... the day of perfection remains yet future. So as long as we maintain that abiding (a.k.a. "being brought forth from God," "following after the Spirit, not the flesh"), we needn't fear anything. BUT, we will fall out of that abiding – guaranteed; that "abiding" is **not** a constant state of being. The real issue is, should that happen *too often and become a lifestyle choice* (us NOT abiding in Christ) then we do indeed need to fear what the Lord will do. Because He said exactly what He will do – to those who do not abide in Him and thereby do not produce fruit, they will be cast into the fire and *burned*.<sup>99</sup> So really, that fear should always be with us in this life.

There are many variables in the idea of fear. First and foremost, we are to always fear *the Lord*, no exceptions. While we are in this body of death, plagued by a sin nature that is our constant passenger, we are to always fear what the Lord can and will do to us should that sin nature overcome us. Here are just a few verses that say this—

Exodus 20:20

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

Leviticus 25:17

Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the LORD your God.

Psalms 2:11

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

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<sup>99</sup> We have yet to talk about the *alternative* to entering the kingdom of the heavens, the results of the *negative judgment* one will receive if not found faithful. This is a tough topic to address, because no one wants to consider that something so devastating could happen to them. Paul describes it in Romans 2:8-9 as "indignation," "wrath," "tribulation," and "anguish." Matthew uses the terms "outer darkness" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in 8:12, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30. Luke uses the term "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in 13:28. The other term used is the Greek word "Gehenna," which is always erroneously translated as "hell" rather than its proper name (and it's only found in Scripture in the context of being the *opposite of receiving positive rewards from the Lord regarding the kingdom*). Gehenna is used in Matt. 5:22, 5:29, 5:30, 10:28, 18:9 and 23:15, Mark 9:43, 9:45, and 9:47, and Luke 12:5; it is the Greek word for the Valley of Hinnom, a place referenced in the Old Testament as one of the "high places" where the nation of Israel would offer sacrifices to idols (like Molech), even so far as to sacrifice their children by fire to these foreign gods. It was an abominable place and Israel's participation there ignited God's wrath. Because of the imagery presented by all of the above references, the conclusion is that if we are not found faithful at the judgment seat, we will find ourselves outside of the glory of our Lord, outside of the Light of the world, in a place God considers an abomination, and we will be *utterly and completely* sorrowful, having come short of our calling. And remember, this is a *temporary* separation—it is for 1,000 years.

Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments;

Psalm 145:19

He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The idea from John is having CONFIDENCE regarding the day of judgment vs. FEAR of the day of judgment. And in connection with that, CONFIDENCE in the Lord and His promises, or FEAR of all else. The distinction here is to be found in where your fear is placed—

Matthew 10:28

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [literally, "Gehenna"]. (Note he does not mention *spirit*, only the soul and body [which are inextricably connected, Lev. 17:11]. The spirit abides with God perpetually and forever once saved; the salvation of the soul and body is what is on the line at the judgment seat.)

The confidence (or *boldness*) we are to have (while having a healthy fear of the Lord) is summed up in the following verses:

Hebrews 3:6

...but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Hebrews 10:35-39

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe [literally "have faith"] to the saving of the soul.

Because we FEAR THE LORD, we are to stay faithful to the word of the Lord/to Christ/to God, which means we abide in Christ/follow the Spirit/abide in God's love/are brought forth from God. If we do that, then we needn't fear anything else. Because that perfect love casts out all other fear. As it should, since we would be doing that which we are supposed to do, according to what God said to do, so we will receive what God has promised. That's **confidence**. And this confidence comes from knowing what God has promised...and knowing what God has promised means KNOWING HIS WORD. Knowing His Word means knowing the Word that became flesh... Jesus

the Christ is the Word made flesh. We must not only abide in Christ, but we must abide in His Word—the *Scriptures*. Only when we KNOW what God has said can we truly have confidence in what God has indeed said. And that takes work, perseverance and endurance.

One other thing concerning 1 John 4:18, he says that “fear involves torment/punishment.” That word for “punishment” is only found one other place in the New Testament, and that’s in Matthew 25:46 with the issues surrounding inheriting the kingdom/entering into life or NOT inheriting the kingdom and receiving “eternal [age-lasting] punishment.” That Greek word is not so much the idea of vengeance; it’s more of the idea of *correction*. So fear involves “correction.” Of course it does – if one lives in fear of the world, the enemy, **anything other than God**, he/she is walking by the flesh and not the Spirit and therefore MUST BE CORRECTED.

It is an issue of maturity. When we are babes in Christ, we fear everything. We fear the unknown, we fear our enemy, we fear the world, we may even fear each other... but when we fear the Lord, the wisdom comes. When wisdom comes, we understand what we must do, WHY we must do it, and for WHOM we must do it. And with that understanding and wisdom, *coupled with lots of practice* (Heb. 5:14), we gain CONFIDENCE. We know that victory is ours because Christ declared it. We know that even though we will fail at times, we have a High Priest to wash and cleanse us. We know that our works will be tested and we can be confident that our works are righteous... so we therefore need not fear our enemy anymore, we need not fear the Judgment Seat anymore (but have a healthy respect for it because it WILL happen), and we need not fear our God who judges righteously. We learn to live in His love. We learn not to fear. Not that we can live and abide in His love on a continual basis... but that those moments of abiding increase, day in and day out. We hopefully experience more moments of abiding than NOT abiding. More moments of being one with Him. In those moments we are truly brought forth from God, not sinning, truly in the Spirit and truly in perfect love where there can be no fear.

## **PART XIV — THE LEAVEN**

At the very start of this study I mentioned that Scripture teaches **the word of the kingdom** will be almost non-existent in Christendom near the end of the age, the days we are currently living in. Those who understand the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11) can clearly see this; these are those mentioned fourth in the parable of the sower, the one “who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matt. 13:23). There are a few places in the New Testament where Jesus Himself states this. Let’s look at Luke’s account first—

Luke 18:1-8

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" 6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find [the] faith on the earth?"

The last sentence in this passage is written in such a way in the Greek so as to expect a negative answer to the question, to be read more like, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, He will **not** find the faith on the earth, will He?” The phrase, “the faith,” is *very specific*, as it contains the definite article in front of it (as we noted earlier, the definite article is used to put emphasis on the noun it precedes). “The faith” is the “the belief” in the message that Jesus brought, that Israel rejected, and the apostles then preached after Jesus’ ascension...which is *all things* contained in the phrase “the word of the kingdom.” **This is the primary message of the Scriptures.** (See Acts 6:7, 14:22, 16:5, 24:24, Rom. 1:5, 14:1, 16:25, 1 Cor. 16:13, 2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 1:23, Eph. 4:13, Col. 1:23, 2:7, 1 Tim. 3:9, 4:1, 5:8, 6:21, 1 Pet. 5:9, and Jude 1:3. These, among many more, all use the term “the faith.”)

So let’s take a look at some passages that explain *why* the word of the kingdom is barely found.

We started this study with the parable of the sower, so let’s now look at the very next parable in the sequence Jesus spoke (re-read the first one to refresh your memory, Matt. 13:1-23)—

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42

He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of [the] heaven[s] may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ 29 But he

said, 'No, lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat in my barn."'"

36 Then He left the multitude, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then 'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun' in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

This parable starts with a phrase that appears problematic at the get-go: "The kingdom of the heavens may be compared to..." We've already studied at length what the kingdom of the heavens is, and since it's the current literal domain of Satan and his demons, this *place* couldn't possibly be the context of these parables. Remember *the purpose* of parables (Matt. 13:11-13, 51-52); they are about knowing and understanding the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, the word of the kingdom, *that message which was spoken and heard*. This parable continues immediately after our first one, which was about *God's people hearing the word of the kingdom* and responding either favorably or not. This parable is just a continuation of this WORD of the kingdom of the heavens... not the actual kingdom itself. So the idea behind the beginning of this parable is more contextually accurate to be seen as, "The *message* of the kingdom of the heavens may be compared to..."

Another thing to note is that this is a sequence of 7 parables in a row. Although they are not told in a single sitting (like the Sermon on the Mount), they are told *on the same day*. We can see by the use of the setting that this is so; Jesus "leaves the house" in 13:1 at the beginning, He "returns to the house" in 13:36 (after leaving the multitudes and is alone with His disciples), then He sums it all up in 13:51 when He asks His disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" Then, in 13:53 we read, "And it came about that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there." So we need to view all 7 of these parables together, as well as separate.<sup>100</sup>

When we view all 7 parables as a *sequence*, using the explanations Jesus gives concerning the first 2, we can see that the truths being told with these parables have to do with the word of the kingdom as it relates to the *remaining length of this age* (Matt. 13:39-41), or more precisely, *this*

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<sup>100</sup> This also sets the tone for all of Jesus' parables, since this is the first time He uses them. He not only uses them separately, but also as a group to teach a larger message. This is actually the meaning of the Greek word for parable, 'parabole.' It is the word 'para,' which means "near" or "alongside" and the word 'bole' (root 'ballo'), which means "to cast." Parables, therefore, are "cast alongside" other truths in order to bring about a deeper, *veiled* truth (remember why Jesus begins speaking in parables).

*“dispensation.”*<sup>101</sup> So not only is the sequence of parables presenting us with a *historical* account concerning the word of the kingdom, it’s also presenting a future account as well.

Read the previous parable again, keeping in mind that it is the second parable of the sequence, and it is unfolding a previously hidden truth (revealing part of the *mystery*) concerning the future (at that time) trajectory of the word of the kingdom as it relates to the soon-to-be new creation, *the church*. Let’s now rephrase the parable of the wheat and tares with all of this in mind:<sup>102</sup>

This message regarding *the offer of* the kingdom of the heavens will continue on like this: The “good seed” is the one from the previous parable, the parable of the sower; the “good seed” is the one who hears, understands, and starts to produce fruit. Jesus takes this “good seed,” which are the “sons of the kingdom,” and places them in the world. But after this is done – and while the men were sleeping – the devil places his “sons” *among them*. An interesting thing to note about wheat and tares is that both look very similar as they grow together in the field; they both appear lush and green as they grow. However, once the plants start to mature, the difference can be observed—the wheat *produces edible fruit* while the tares *do not*. Jesus leaves the wheat and the tares together during this dispensation, as it is only at *the end of the age* that He will

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<sup>101</sup> “Dispensation” is a useful term to describe the way God deals with His separate “people groups.” The time from Abraham to Israel’s rejection of Jesus and His message of the kingdom—and the subsequent setting aside of Israel for it—is considered a *dispensation*. The word “dispensation” in Greek is ‘oikonomia,’ which literally means “a stewardship in which one manages the affairs of a household” (the root word ‘oikos’ means “house”). The nation of Israel were God’s stewards, and when they rejected Jesus and His message (then rejected by God Himself), the church was brought into being to manage God’s affairs instead (after they first attempted to make Israel jealous enough to repent, Rom. 10:1-11:25). Therefore, the dispensation of the church is the time from Jesus’ ascension (and the coming of the Holy Spirit) to the time of the removal of the church at the end of this age (and the subsequent removal of the Holy Spirit as well). (See also Luke 16:2-13, 1 Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10, 3:2, and Col. 1:25.) There is a chart at the end of this study that shows how this aligns with God’s structure of time of “seven days.”

<sup>102</sup> Remember what the message of the kingdom was and is—it was and is an offer to participate with Jesus in His coming kingdom, and the conditions for entry were and are repentance and obedience. The offer was and is to all of God’s people, but not everyone hears and understands it and bears fruit.

harvest them. He (through His angels) will remove these stumbling blocks and lawless ones out of His kingdom. Then it is the righteous **sons** who will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.<sup>103</sup>

Seeing that the tares and wheat are left together throughout this dispensation, we can imagine the havoc they wreak in the lives of the “good seed,” those “sons of the kingdom” in the world who are producing fruit for the Lord. Actually, we don’t have to imagine it; we just need to read the next parable—

Matthew 13:31-32

He presented another parable to them, saying, “The [word of the] kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is [continues on] like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: 32 and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

This is a parable that contemporary pastors and Bible teachers use to teach about the prophesied growth of the church in a *positive* way (just like the next one, the parable of the leaven; errors easily made when the phrase “kingdom of heaven” is misunderstood); the truth of the parable, however, is *exactly the opposite*. Keeping in mind the sequence of these parables so far, let’s see what this third parable is teaching us.

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<sup>103</sup> This description “sons of the kingdom” is entirely appropriate for two reasons. Since they’ve responded favorably to the message of the kingdom and are aligning themselves with God’s expectations accordingly, they would be “a son,” also known as “an heir” as we saw in Romans 8:17-19; (cross reference Hebrews 12:1-13 for additional details concerning “sons”). Additionally, there are two Greek words for “son”: ‘teknon’ and ‘huios.’ The word ‘teknon’ refers to a child *in general* (could be male or female) whereas ‘huios’ is a son; not only does it indicate a male child, but it also conveys the idea that the son exhibits the characteristics of and does the bidding of his father, as an obedient son would be expected to do. When Jesus is referred to as “the Son of Man” and “the Son of God,” both phrases use the word ‘huios.’

I challenge you to ask yourself who the “sons [‘huios’] of the evil one” are, keeping in mind the definition of the word “sons.” Recent tradition teaches that these are *unsaved* individuals, whom the devil sows next to Christians in order to cause havoc in their faith. Scripture shows otherwise. Read John 8:42-45, “Jesus said to them [the scribes and the Pharisees], ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar and the father of lies.’” See also Matthew 16:13-19 when Peter answers Jesus correctly concerning His identity – Jesus calls him “blessed” – and the very next moment when Jesus begins to talk about His crucifixion Peter denies that it should happen. Jesus then says to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan!” and calls him a stumbling block for setting his mind on things of man, not of God. And Matthew chapter 23:1-39, but specifically 23:27, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.” Remember our study of the nation of Israel, to whom Jesus came with a spiritual message that He *expected* them to hear and understand. Think also about what we learned regarding the events at Kadesh Barnea, and the unbelief of the religious leaders and their condemnation. Also read 2 Peter chapters 2 and 3, Jude 1:1-25, 2 Timothy 3:1-4:4, Revelation 2:1-3:22 (as we learned in the last Part, this is a picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ when all the Church- *all saved individuals*- stand before Jesus as their Judge).

It begins like the last parable, so it is actually saying, “The message [or *offer*] of the kingdom of the heavens continues on like a mustard seed that a man sowed in his field...” And just like the parable of the wheat and tares, this is something we can easily view in nature and see its characteristics, adding more to the parable. The mustard seed is a very tiny seed indeed, and when mature the mustard *plant* reproduces seed quite rapidly, so much so that many consider it a weed. We also know that when fully grown, a mustard *plant* can reach up to 8 feet or so, with a lot of thin branches. In nature, *a mustard seed never becomes a “tree.”*

To rephrase the sequence of parables thus far, including this one: The message of the kingdom of the heavens was spoken to many, but very few understood and bore fruit relative to it. Those that heard the word of the kingdom, understood it, and bore fruit relative to it, Jesus sent into the world; but at the same time Satan placed his tares next to them. Those few “sons of the kingdom”—the newly created church, the mustard seed—are out in the world, being fruitful and multiplying; so the church, the mustard seed (those in possession of the message of the kingdom of the heavens) starts to grow. But it grows with the “sons of the evil one” alongside the “sons of the kingdom,” and therefore it grows *unnaturally*. It grows so much it becomes “a tree,” which a mustard seed (*the church*) should never become. And because it’s now a tree, which it should never have become, the “birds of the air” come and nest in its branches. These “birds of the air” are the same birds from the parable of the sower: the evil ones who snatch up the word of the kingdom before it can take root and bear fruit in those who hear it. And so it continued, and still continues on.<sup>104</sup>

As conditions regarding the message of the kingdom of the heavens worsen, we come to the parable of the leaven, the 4<sup>th</sup> parable in the sequence—

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The [word of the] kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is [continues on] like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

The message of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens is compared to *leaven*, which a woman took and *hid* in three pecks of meal (flour/dough), until it was **all leavened**. Before we unpack this, we need to first see how Scripture defines *leaven*.

When the first generation of Israel was brought out of Egypt with the judgment of the death of the firstborn, immediately after they were told this—

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<sup>104</sup> The destructive work of the tares is a subject that progressively appears as one moves along in the New Testament. False teachers and their doctrines of demons creep in, the church allows it, gives heed to it, and then embraces it. Read in order Acts 20:24-32, 1 Cor. 5:1-6, 2 Cor. 11:1-15, Gal. 1:6-8, 2 Thess. 2:1-4, 3:1-2, 1 Tim. 1:18-20, 4:1-3, 6:3-5, 20-21, 2 Tim. 1:15, 2:15-18, 3:1-9, 13, 4:1-4, 10-15, Titus 1:10-16, 2 Pet. 2:1-2:22, 3:3-7, Jude 1:1-25.

#### Exodus 12:14-20

[The Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron, to be retold to the nation of Israel]

“Now this day [the Passover] will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And on the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. 17 You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. 20 You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.”

Leaven was to be *completely removed* from every household for a period of 7 days immediately following the Passover. This was a permanent ordinance to be observed *perpetually* by all generations. Leaven was also to be kept out of all grain offerings made by the priests to the Lord, as well as all bread consumed by the priests (Ex. 29:1-3, Lev. 2:1, 4-6, 11, and 8:1-9).<sup>105</sup>

Leaven is also mentioned in the New Testament—

#### Matthew 16:1-12

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Him asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 But He answered and said to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ 3 And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them, and went away. 5 And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread. 6 And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 7 And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, “It is because we took no bread.” 8 But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? 10

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<sup>105</sup> The one exception to this was the Feast of Weeks, in which the priest was to take two loaves baked with leaven and wave them (not putting them on the altar) before the Lord as a new grain offering 50 days after their Passover. *The priests were not to eat the loaves* (Lev. 23:15-20). The Feast of Weeks was the day we know of as Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit came upon those who had believed that Jesus was the Christ, constituting the formal beginning of “the church.” The symbolism of the leaven in the two loaves in Leviticus was foreshadowing this event wherein two distinct people groups, Jews and Gentiles – all of them men with corrupted sin natures (leaven) – were being brought together into the one new man in Christ (Acts 2:1-47).

Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up? 11 How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

#### 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. 3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 12 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

#### Galatians 5:1-10

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. 7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion did not come from Him who call you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. 10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

Scripture teaches that leaven *is symbolically bad*. It's used to describe the evil and unbelieving *teachings* of the Pharisees and Sadducees; it's used to describe the *sinful behavior* of one of the members of the church who was sexually immoral; it's described as a *powerful corrupting agent* that if left unchecked can corrupt everything around it. And Paul uses the picture of the Feast of

Unleavened Bread as a message to the church that we, too, must clean out the old leaven and celebrate in Christ with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Leaven, symbolically, is NOT a good thing.

Now back to the parable of the leaven. It's the fourth in the sequence, so we'll need to incorporate what has been revealed so far in the previous three to our understanding of what the fourth one teaches us.

To rephrase: The message of the kingdom of the heavens was spoken to many, but very few understood and bore fruit relative to it. Those that did bear fruit, Jesus sent into the world; but at the same time Satan placed his tares next to them. Those few "sons of the kingdom" out in the world are fruitful and they multiply, so the church (the mustard seed, those in possession of the message) starts to grow. But it grows with the "sons of the evil one" alongside the "sons of the kingdom," and therefore it grows *unnaturally* large. It grows so much it becomes "a tree," which a mustard seed (*the church*) should never become. And because it's now a tree, which it should never have become, the "birds of the air" come and nest in its branches. These "birds of the air" are the same birds from the parable of the sower: the evil ones who snatch up the word of the kingdom before it can take root and bear fruit in those who hear it. The church is now comprised of enemies of the gospel of the kingdom, not only snatching the message of the kingdom of the heavens away, but also introducing corrupted teachings (relative to the message of the kingdom) and sinful behavior that continuously "leavens" everything around them, until the whole word of the kingdom is leavened.<sup>106</sup> And since we know we are living near the end of this age, *this prophecy is almost fulfilled*. This passage from the Book of Revelation records something similar—

#### Revelation 3:14-22

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 16 So **because you are lukewarm**, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. 18 I advise you to buy from Me

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<sup>106</sup> The parable says this leaven is "hidden" in "three pecks [measurements] of meal." It being *hidden* is incredibly important because it was not obvious at the time, nor is it now. It's the hidden work of the false teachers teaching false doctrine, which the unlearned and immature church allowed in and embraced. And notice where it was hidden, "three pecks of meal"; three is the number of divine perfection, and the meal is what's used to make bread—bread is symbolic of the Word of God (Matt. 4:4, John 6:31-35, John 1:14). The leaven was hidden in *the word of God*, though not the word of God in a general sense; it's specific to the "word" mentioned at the beginning of the parable of the sower — "the word of the kingdom."

Note that we are told by Paul in 1 Cor. 2:10 that there are "deep things of God," that which we the church can know because we have "the mind of Christ" (but only when we walk according to the Spirit, not the flesh). But we are also told in Rev. 2:12 that there are "deep things of Satan." The deep things of Satan can only be a fraudulent form of God's Word, a corrupted form of the word of the kingdom. We are shown from the beginning of Scripture that this is how the devil works, "Has God indeed said...?" (Gen. 3:1) He takes what is perfect and pure and changes it, thereby corrupting it. Lest we forget 2 Cor. 11:1-15, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (verses 14-15).

gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

This is the 7<sup>th</sup> church addressed at the Judgment Seat (Jesus addressing all 7 churches are to be understood both separately and together as a whole, just like the parables), prophetically portraying the church in the last days. Jesus has nothing positive to say, *nothing*. The church *doesn't even know* that Jesus considers them wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Notice its condition: it is lukewarm. In what temperature does leaven multiply the most? **Lukewarm**. Jesus is standing outside the door of the church and is knocking... if any ONE answers He will come in to him and dine with him. Please have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the church.

The message of the kingdom of the heavens—**the word of the kingdom**— is still expected to be given today, to the only group of individuals on this earth with the capacity for spiritual understanding—the church. There is still to be a call *to the saved* to repent (change your mind and behaviors) because there is still yet a kingdom that is coming. That is the message that we are to study, learn, live, teach and share. It is a message of love and compassion and *fear* and *urgency*, in the exact same manner as was Jesus' message to His people the first time—love, mercy, compassion, fear, and urgency.

And when this message is condemned by those it was meant for, rejected and ridiculed by those it is being offered to, it shows that God's people really haven't changed. Israel rejected it the first time, so therefore it is no surprise that the church would reject it today—

Hebrews 5:12-6:6

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. 6:1 Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal [literally “age-lasting”] judgment. 3 And this we shall do, if God permits. 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.

If anyone hears the word of the kingdom...

## **PART XV — CONCLUSION & CHARTS**

This has been quite a journey through the Scriptures, so let's sum up the main points we've covered. (Once you reach the end of this study I encourage you to go back to the beginning and start again. Read each Scripture verse mentioned and even more so, read as much surrounding context as you can. You WILL grow in your knowledge and faith as long as you stay in the Word and hold fast to the truth. And of course pray always!)

We've learned about the construct of "time" as it pertains to *this age*; an age that will last 6,000 years. Satan is currently the god and ruler of this age, and he rules the earth from the heavens with his fallen angels. This, however, is all occurring within God's Supreme Rule as nothing happens outside of His Sovereignty. We also learned that there is an age that is coming. This coming age will follow directly after this present age and will last 1,000 years; this coming age is the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, also known as the Seventh Day, our Sabbath *Rest*, the Day of the Lord. The fullness of "time" is seen in the construct of 7,000 years as set forth in the beginning pages of Scripture in the account of God's restorative work of the heavens and the earth. He worked for 6 days to bring about the restoration of His fallen creation—the heavens and earth, followed by a 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest. And He is now working 6,000 years to bring about the restoration of His fallen creation—man. *This is the way God structured His Word in order to represent His ways of restoration.* Therefore, as we study all fundamental doctrines of Christianity we must see how everything fits within this structure.

The concept of life and death, as seen within this structure, is simple. Man consists of three parts – spirit, soul, and body. When man is born he is born *dead* (death simply means *separation*). All three parts of man are separated from God due to the one transgression of Adam that was then passed on to all mankind (save One – Jesus the Christ). Man therefore needs *life* for all three parts; he needs to be *saved from death*. Since man is in this fallen state during this age, he is currently not achieving his created purpose, which is to rule. *Man needs life* (fellowship with God) *and salvation in order to rule*. This process will take six "days," or six 1,000-year periods, culminating in a final Day of Rest. (These seven days end just prior to the beginning of the ages of eternity.)

Man first receives spiritual life through faith in God's provision of a substitutionary sacrifice of death and shed blood. The complete, perfect and ONLY sacrifice is Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This initial giving of life/salvation pertains to man's spirit, and once given *it remains throughout all the ages to come*. Subsequent to receiving spiritual life, saved man must then choose to forfeit his soul/life in this age in order to receive his soul/life in the age to come (which is viewed *as a reward, an inheritance*). He must also, during his Christian life, receive the provision given for the cleansing and forgiving of sins, which is the shed blood of Christ currently on the Mercy Seat in the heavens, where Jesus is acting as High Priest and ministering on behalf of His people. If the Christian practices this life of faithful obedience (works done in faith) *by following the Spirit and allowing God to restore him*, he will be justified at the Judgment Seat of Christ and receive the salvation of his soul. Along with the salvation of his soul

he will receive the salvation/redemption of his body – a body that is given to “sons,”<sup>107</sup> who will be *glorified*, as this is needed to fully be in the image and likeness of God. This subsequent life and salvation pertains to the kingdom age and is given as a reward for working out your salvation (i.e. *overcoming*). Life and salvation pertaining to the kingdom age is a separate process from the life and salvation that pertains to the ages after the seventh day.

The good news about the word of the kingdom is about Jesus’ coming kingdom and our individual participation in it. The message of the kingdom of the heavens was given to Israel at Jesus’ first coming; they rejected it and their King who brought it. The message of “repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand” —the word of the kingdom—is now to be given to the church. The message of the kingdom is NOT about initial salvation; it is a message for *the saved*, calling them to repentance, calling them to live a Spirit-led life of faithful obedience, so that they’ll be found to be faithful servants at the Judgment Seat.

Many saved individuals *will not* receive the salvation of their soul and corresponding redemption of the body and *will not* rule with Christ during the coming age, the Seventh Day. However, this person *still has life that pertains to the spirit* – presently, and for all the ages to come.

At the end of the 7,000 years of time, we see the institution of a new heavens and a new earth wherein time *as we know it* ceases. The throne of God combines with the throne of the Lamb and we see God’s dwelling place switch from the upper recesses of the north *to the new earth* (1 Cor. 15:23-25, Rev. 21:1-5). From that point onward we are given but a glimpse in the Scriptures as to what will transpire, except that saved mankind will rule with the Godhead throughout the ages of ages.

Our God is a God of mercy and compassion. We belong to a Father who loves us mightily and loves us in a way that is beyond human comprehension; He provides for us ample abundance and blessing, everything that is necessary to be victorious in this race of the faith. Our Father loves us so much that He sent His Son to the earth in a body of flesh, died in a most horrific way, and in a real sense *He shed His own blood* in order to bring salvation and life and forgiveness to us – His creation.

We also serve a God of justice. We serve a God of perfection and righteousness in Whom there is no flaw, no sin, no deviance, no lies, *no evil whatsoever*. God will achieve that which He has set out to do and He will do it perfectly. He will not fail. We serve a God of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Everything He does and says and wills and plans is perfect.

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<sup>107</sup> More precisely, *firstborn* sons- a concept we haven’t addressed in this study. Jesus is God’s only begotten firstborn Son (Heb. 1:6, John 3:16), Israel was also God’s firstborn son (Ex. 4:22), and we, the church, are currently awaiting “son-placement” as firstborn sons – Heb. 12:22-23, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect...” Scripture shows us from the beginning that firstborn sons (in the earthly, foreshadowing the spiritual) are the ones who take over their father’s household: they receive a double portion of the father’s inheritance, assume priestly duties for the household, and perform judicial duties for the household. However, the Bible also shows us that firstborn rights can be forfeited (Esau and Reuben, for example). This is a whole Bible study in itself!

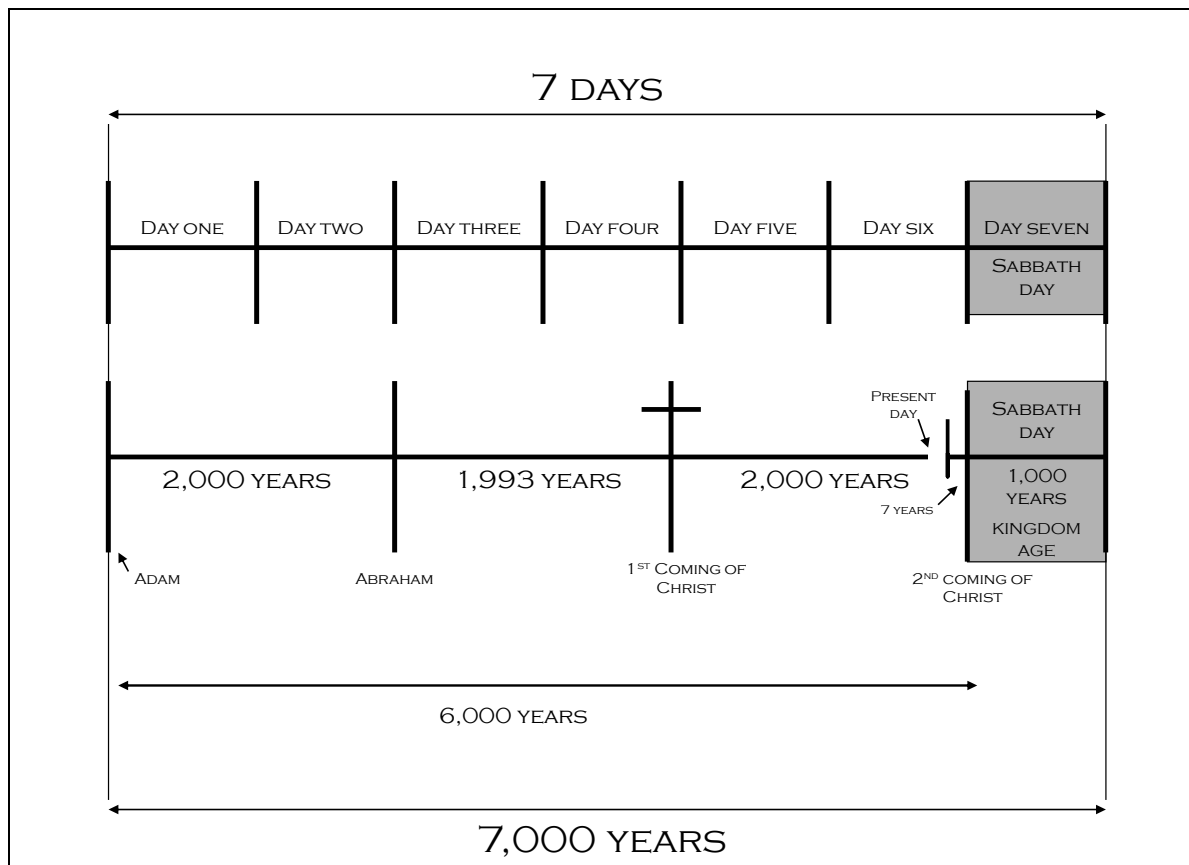
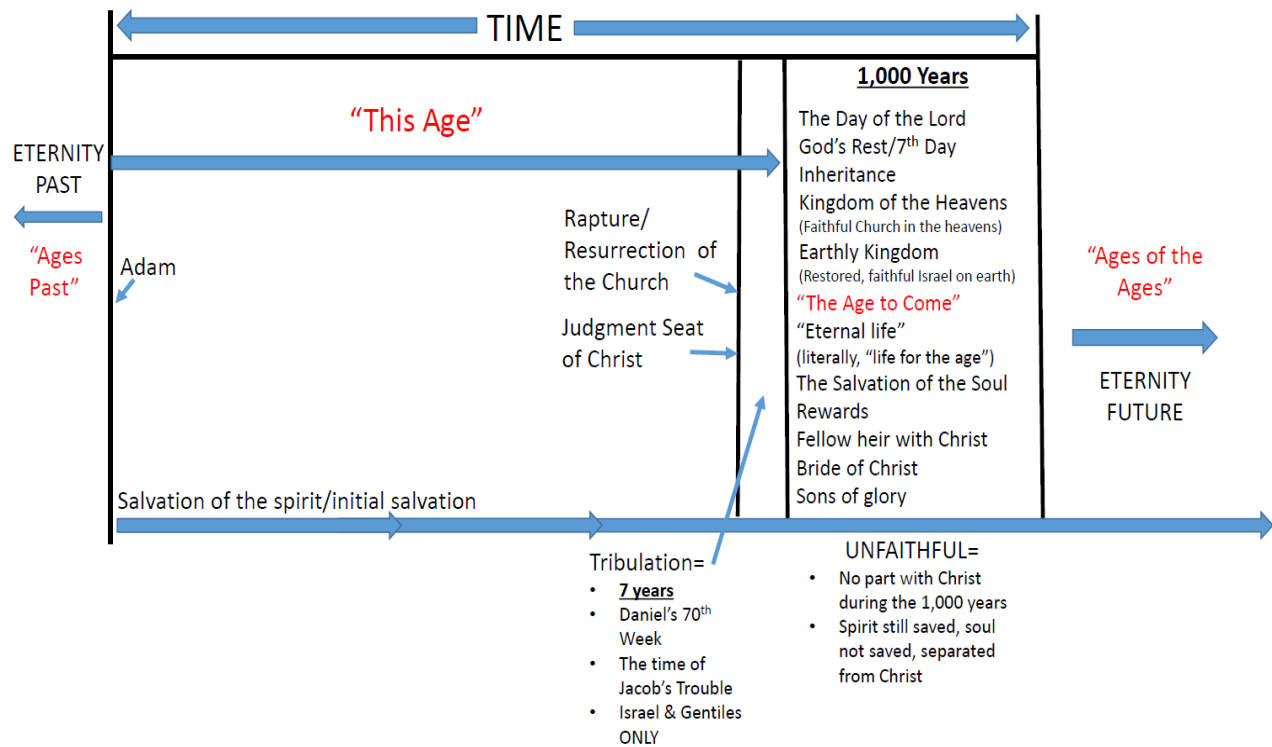
Having said that, we may very well not like what we read in the Scriptures sometimes. We may find ourselves full of fear concerning what we read in the Scriptures sometimes. *That's okay.* But when that happens, remember that God will not fail in what He has set out to do, nor will He abandon us or leave us. Should we stray from the course and find ourselves in a place of disobedience or unrepentance, it is *we* who have left God. He has not left us. And not only has He seen fit to give us everything that we would need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), He saw fit to warn us of the consequences regarding our choices – both good and bad (Lev. 26, Deut. 28, though contextually written to Israel, these passages still contain type/anti-type spiritual truths for us, the church). So if we at any time decide that God's way is too hard or too narrow, we must remember that it is not our plans that God needs to fit into – *we must fit into His.*

And because of what the future will bring us, because of all the things that we have studied, it is with utmost seriousness that we must approach the Scriptures. We should not be learning these things simply to increase the capacity of knowledge within our minds. We should not be learning these things in order to esteem ourselves above those around us. We need to learn these things in order to *live* these things and have the very thoughts and words of God transform us into the image of His Son. If we can attain to these things then we will no doubt be the light on the hill, the salt of the earth, and the messengers of the good news that God commands us to be. And if we can give an account of the hope that is within us then we may be able to be the vessel that God uses to show life to those who are dead, and life to those who are perishing. And not only that, He can use the implanted word to save our souls (James 1:21).

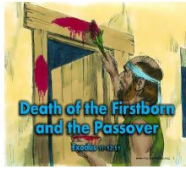
And if we receive the salvation of our soul in that future day, we will receive the redemption of our body and we will be found complete at the coming of our Lord and Savior, our Judge and King. And if we are found complete, we will hear those magnificent words spoken directly to us, "Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17).

It is a choice. I pray that we make the right one. *Daily.*

Keep studying!

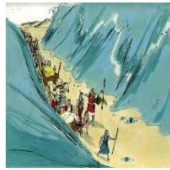


## FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAEL



Death of the firstborn

Substitutionary death



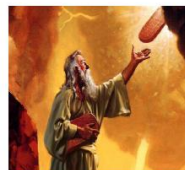
Red Sea crossing

Enter place of death, come out on other side



Journey with God

Being led by the cloud by day, fire by night



Obey the Word of God

Mosaic Law



Promised Land

Land promised to Abraham's descendants  
Rest, Inheritance, Kingdom—*The goal of their initial salvation*  
EARTHLY THEOCRACY

Warnings & consequences for disobedience & unbelief—  
Cut off from Israel, no inheritance in the land, not entering God's rest

## CHRISTIAN



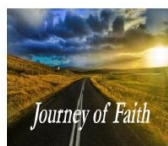
Death of the firstborn

Substitutionary death



Baptism

Keep old man down, live in newness of life



Journey with God

Being led by the Holy Spirit daily



Obey the Word of God

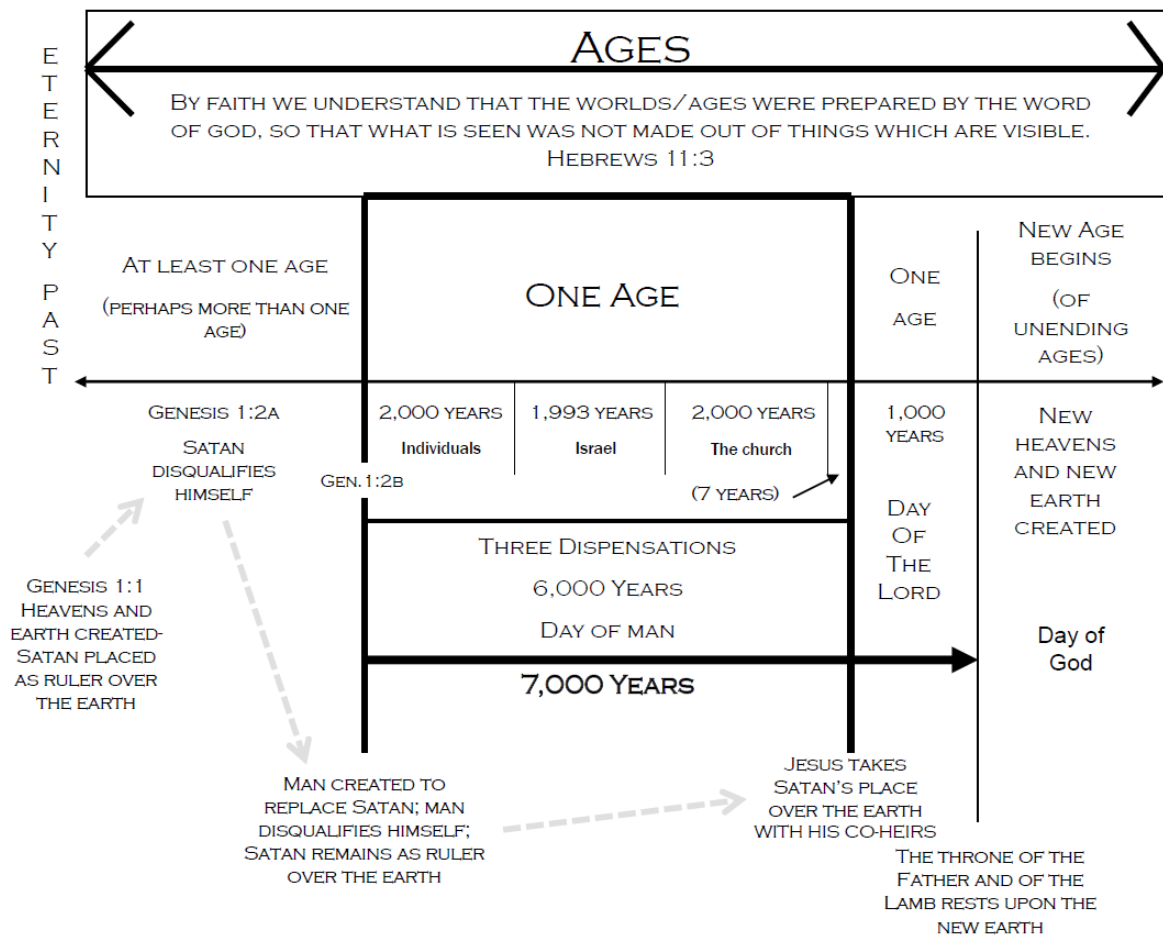
Christ, the Word made flesh



Promised Land

Land promised to Abraham's descendants  
Rest, Inheritance, Kingdom, Reward—*the goal of our initial salvation*  
HEAVENLY THEOCRACY  
THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS

Warnings & consequences for disobedience & unbelief—  
Cut off, no inheritance in the land, not entering God's rest, no reward



## APPENDIX

### APOLOGETICS: Why do we believe the Bible?

We've just spent over 100 pages learning doctrine from the whole of the Scriptures, laying out the truths it presents about who we are, why we are here, who God is, who Jesus is, who our enemy is, and what the future holds. We know the Bible is the Word of God, that it is "God-breathed/God's Spirit" (2 Tim. 3:16) and that the entirety of it is about Jesus the Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:1-14); this is why we use it as THE guide book for our Christian walk and no other. This belief, however, is *not just an act of faith on our part*; the Bible is an amazingly unique book whose origins and preservation are unlike any other book in history. Let's take a look at some of the reasons why.

#### WHY THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE

The original books/letters of the Bible – from Genesis to Revelation – were written over a span of 1600 years, by over 40 different authors, numerous different places (prison, wilderness, palace, etc.), in 3 different languages and on over 3 different continents. The Bible as we now know it speaks to hundreds of controversial issues, ***yet speaks with harmony and continuity on each***. Thousands of individuals have tried to silence it over the years; thousands have tried to *discredit* it, all to no avail.

There are two tests that are given works of antiquity (anything written before the printing press) to decide reliability: the number of manuscripts (a manuscript is a hand written copy of the original) and the time between the original writing and the first manuscript (first *copy*). The longer the time span, the more opportunity that corruption could have entered the text.

Regarding the number of manuscripts, the New Testament is in first place over all works of antiquity, with over 25,000 manuscripts (about 5800 in Greek and around 20,000 in other languages).<sup>108</sup> In second place is Homer's *The Iliad*, with around 1800 manuscripts. Interesting to note that no one ever disputes the reliability of *The Iliad*, whether it remains true to its original author's intent, as do so many about the New Testament.

Regarding the timing of the manuscripts, the New Testament comes in first place with as little as 50 years to as much as 250 years between the original and the earliest manuscripts (second place again is *The Iliad*, which is at 500 years.) The rest of the works of antiquity range from 750 to 1600 years. So if the New Testament is unreliable in its authenticity, then every other work produced should be considered the same (which they're not).

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<sup>108</sup> The New Testament has such a large number of manuscripts because they were trying to get as many copies as possible into as many hands as possible, as quickly as possible.

Now considering the Old Testament, since “ordinary” people were not allowed to have copies (only religious rulers and priests), very few reproductions were authorized. Here's the rules that were kept when the Old Testament manuscripts were being made:

- A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of “clean” animals (those the Law declared “clean,” such as cattle, sheep, and deer).
- They must be prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew.
- These must be fastened together with strings from “clean” animals.
- Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex (book).
- The length of each column must not extend less than 48 or more than 60 lines, and the breadth must consist of 30 letters.
- The whole copy must be first lined; if three words be written without a line, it is worthless.
- The ink should be black—not red, green, or any others color—and be prepared according to a specific recipe.
- An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate.
- No word or letter, not even a ‘yod’ (the smallest of the Hebrew letters, about the size of an apostrophe), must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him.
- Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene.
- Between every ‘parashah,’ or section, the breadth of nine consonants.
- Between every book, three lines.
- The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
- The copyist must sit in full Jewish dress.
- The copyist must wash his whole body before beginning.
- The copyist must begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink.
- And should a king address him while writing that name, he must take no notice of him.

Manuscripts not following these rules were immediately burned. They believed in this quality control system so much that the new manuscripts were given equal authority with the original immediately.

So, did all of this work? Here's some proof: in 1947 a Bedouin shepherd boy was looking for his lost goat and stumbled upon a cave high up on a cliff on the west side of the Dead Sea (about 8 miles south of Jericho). Inside he found large jars containing scrolls; the scrolls were in excellent condition because the jars were well sealed. The date of these scrolls was determined to be between 300 B.C and A.D. 68, predating the present ones by 1,000 years in some cases. And comparing the most recent manuscripts with the ones found in the cave, it was found that there was *very little deviation between them*. Here's one example: of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there was only one word in question between the two examples (this was the word “light” which in Hebrew is only 3 letters. The deviation did not alter the text, however). So after 1,000 years of transmission, that was the only difference found, clearly showing God's hand in the preservation of the texts. (This though does not address the *translation issues* from one language into another.

What we're talking about here is the copying of one manuscript to another, in the same way that the printing press accomplishes this today. The translations are a whole other issue, as we've discussed repeatedly throughout this study.)

Let's look at the writings from another point of view – archaeologists. Here are some quotes:

- Nelson Glueck, an American rabbi, academic and archaeologist. He served as president of Hebrew Union College and his pioneering work in biblical archaeology resulted in the discovery of 1,500 ancient sites—

“No archaeological discovery has every controverted a biblical reference.”

- Dr. Clifford Wilson, former director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology—

“I know of no finding in archaeology that's properly confirmed which is in opposition to the Scriptures. The Bible is the most accurate history textbook the world has ever seen.”

- Werner Keller, author of *The Bible as History*, published in 1955. The book correlated the text of the Bible with the results of archaeological diggings in the Middle East, providing a confirmation for the Bible's veracity which was not dependent on religious faith. It had a circulation of over one million in Germany and has been translated into more than 20 languages —

“In view of the overwhelming mass of authentic and well-attested evidence now available, as I thought of the skeptical criticism which from the eighteenth century onward would fain have demolished the Bible altogether, there kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: The Bible is right after all.”

- William F. Albright, an American archaeologist, biblical scholar, linguist and expert on ceramics. He was the universally-acknowledged founder of the Biblical archaeology movement and confirmed the authenticity of the Dead Sea Scrolls upon their discovery—

“Archaeology has confirmed the historicity of the Old Testament tradition.”

“...rest assured that nothing has been found [by archaeologists] to disturb a reasonable faith, and nothing has been discovered which can disprove a single theological doctrine. We no longer trouble ourselves with attempts to ‘harmonize’ religion and science, or to ‘prove’ the Bible. The Bible can stand for itself.”

- Sir Frederic Kenyon, a British paleographer, biblical and classical scholar. He made a life-long study of the Bible, especially the New Testament as an historical text. His book *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (1895) showed how Egyptian papyri and other evidence from archeology can corroborate the narrative of historical events in the Gospels—

“Archaeology has not yet said its last word, but the results already achieved confirm what faith would suggest – that the Bible can do nothing but gain from an increase in knowledge.”

- Millar Burrows, a biblical scholar and professor emeritus at Yale Divinity School. After the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, he devoted himself to their study, on which he became an authority, publishing *The Dead Sea Scrolls* in 1955, and *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* in 1958—

“More than one archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine.”

- Joseph P. Free, professor of archaeology and history and author of the book *Archaeology and Bible History*, first published in 1950—

“Archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts...Yet archaeological discoveries have shown that these critical charges...are wrong and that the Bible is trustworthy in the very statements which have been set aside as untrustworthy...We do not know of any cases where the Bible has been proved wrong.”

And here’s some evidence for historical accuracy—

- The critics of the Bible used to point to Luke as one of the worst historians ever (claiming over 200 mistakes); however, after continued excavation, that list is down to 10 and Luke is considered by many to be the most accurate historian in human history.
- A man named John Garstang excavated the site of the city of Jericho in the 1930’s and discovered something so startling that he had others sign proof of the fact: the walls of Jericho fell OUT, not *in* as walls always do, which is in exact accord with Joshua 6:20. With the walls falling out, they would indeed fall flat.

Not only can we believe in the accuracy of the **manuscripts**—that what we have today (*removing translation issues, staying with original language as much as possible*) is very close to what each of the authors intended— we can also trust and believe in the accuracy of the numerous written **historical accounts** as well. So the next question is: how does the whole of what is written stand up to scrutiny of *facts*, and more importantly, to fulfilled prophecy?

Concerning prophecy, Deuteronomy 18:20-22 states that if a prophet prophesies and it does not come true, then he is a false prophet and must die. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 states that if a prophet (or dreamer) counsels against God and toward false gods, EVEN IF IT COMES TRUE, they are a false prophet and must be put to death. Also, according to Jeremiah 6:14-15 and 23:9ff, the prophet must not promise false hope when there is no hope, and they must be godly in their own lifestyle. So how does the Bible stand up to this (remembering that 40 different authors wrote it, over a period of 1600 years)? Here’s just some of the many examples of fulfilled prophecy:

### Concerning the city of Tyre—

- PREDICTIONS/PROPHECIES:

- Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city of Tyre (Ezek. 26:8-11).
- There will be many nations against her (Ezek. 26:3).
- It would be made a bare rock, flat like the top of a rock (Ezek. 26:4, 14).
- Her stones, timber and debris would be thrown into the water (Ezek. 26:12).
- She would be a place for the spreading of nets (Ezek. 26:5, 14).
- She will never be rebuilt...never “found” again (Ezek. 26:14, 21).

- FULFILLMENTS:

- Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to mainland Tyre for 13 years from 585-573 BC. When he finally broke the gates down, he found the city almost empty. The majority of the people had moved by ship to an island ½ mile off the coast and fortified a city there. He destroyed the mainland city, but it still remained powerful for several hundred years.
- In 333 BC Alexander the Great called on all the Phoenician cities to open their gates to him. Tyre refused. Thus, Alexander tore down the whole city of Tyre, left by Nebuchadnezzar, and *scraped it clean*. The reason he did this was to use the debris, throw it into the water and construct a 200 feet wide path from the coast to the island city. This causeway and ancient Tyre’s debris can still be seen below the water today. Alexander did not have ships so he had to attach the island city this way—it was a grueling battle, as the people of Tyre fought back quite well.
- Alexander realized that he needed ships to get this job done, so he pressed his conquered subjects to provide and man them for him. At least 9 different nations supplied ships for him, thus there were in fact “many nations against them.” Alexander finally won.
- Many historians, both religious and secular, have observed the spreading of nets to dry on the rocks of mainland Tyre’s ruins. A small fishing village of those who spread their nets is there to this day.
- While there is a great flow of fresh water at this site today that would clearly make it an excellent site for a large city, it still remains today “not built or found.”

### Concerning the city of Sidon—

- PREDICTIONS/PROPHECIES:

- No mention of her being destroyed, yet blood in the streets and a sword on every side (Ezekiel 28:22, 23).

- FULFILLMENTS:

- Sidon has had one of the bloodiest histories imaginable. In 351 BC, after successfully defending their city against the Persian king, their king betrayed them to him. Instead of accepting the torture they knew would come, 40,000 citizens shut themselves up inside their homes and burned themselves to death. It has been attacked and massacred many times in its history, but it still stands today.
- Tyre and Sidon have always been linked together in history—both secular and in the Bible. This is probably because of their close proximity to each other on the Mediterranean coast. The amazing thing is that Ezekiel, a Jew who was exiled to Babylon, was able to accurately predict the exact happenings for both cities, hundreds of years before the occurrence.
- This prophecy of the day would be very much like someone today predicting the fate of San Francisco and Los Angeles, saying one would have constant wars and the other would fall.

Concerning the city of Nineveh—

- PROPHECIES/PREDICTIONS:

- Would be destroyed in a state of drunkenness (Nahum 1:10).
- Would be destroyed in an overflowing flood (Nahum 1:8, 2:6).
- Would be burned (Nahum 3:13).
- Would fall easily, like ripe figs on a tree when shaken (Nahum 3:13).
- Totally destroyed (Nahum 3:19) and probably not rebuilt.

- FULFILLMENTS:

- The end of Nineveh began when the Assyrians, who had been indulging in an evening drinking heavily, staged a battle outside the walls.
- The king of Nineveh felt secure inside its wall; however, after some heavy rains a flood of water broke down some of the city's walls and flooded the lower parts of the city. This made it open to invasion.
- The king panicked and ordered all of his possessions (which included concubines) to be brought in to the palace. He then sealed it and burned it down, with everything and everyone inside.
- The city was under a 3 month siege (which is not long at all, considering most took years—the longest siege being 29 years). When Nineveh finally fell, she fell easily. This is most amazing, considering the city—
  1. Her walls were 100 feet high.
  2. Her walls were 50 feet thick.
  3. Her towers were 200 feet high, with 15 gates.
  4. There was a 150 feet wide moat all the way around the city.

- Ninevah was so destroyed at this time that critics said for years that it did not even exist. Excavators walked over the ruins many times before they found it 30-45 feet under the ground.

To truly understand the greatness of this collection of books, let's look at the prophecies that spoke of "Messiah," Israel's Promised One. We will begin by looking at what was said concerning Him centuries before His arrival, then we we'll look at the claims made by the Man Himself, Jesus, who claimed that He was the One. Let's begin with *just a few* of the close to 300 (some say 400) prophecies made about Messiah in the Old Testament:

- He would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac (not Ishmael), Jacob (not Esau), Judah (not any of his 11 brothers), Jesse, and David.
- He would also be *the Son of God*.
- He would be in the likeness of the prophet, Moses.
- He would be born of a virgin.
- He would be born in Bethlehem.
- He would also come out of Egypt.
- He would be preceded by a messenger.
- He would have a ministry of signs and wonders.
- He would be betrayed by a friend.
- He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver.
- This money would be given for a field.
- He would be accused by false witnesses.
- He would be struck and spit on.
- He would be scourged.
- He would be given gall and vinegar to drink.
- His hands and feet would be pierced.
- He would be hung on a tree.
- He would be hung on a tree with criminals.
- People would cast lots for his clothes.
- He would be mocked.
- His bones would not be broken.
- He would be pierced.

These are just a few. We've already established that the written records concerning these events can be trusted; therefore, how did Jesus pull this off? Maybe by accident He fulfilled these written prophecies? The mathematical probability (according to the book, *Science Speaks* by Peter Stoner, honored and accepted as accurate by the American Scientific Affiliation and the Executive Council of the same group) of one man fulfilling **just 8** of these mentioned is 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000. If you take 48 out of the 300, the number climbs to 1 chance in 10<sup>157</sup>.

Now some may claim that these "prophecies" were written *after* the time of Jesus so as to support their claim of His identity—simply recorded history trying to look like fulfilled prophecy. However, the historic date for the completion of the Old Testament is approximately four

hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus, *plus* the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) was completed around 240 BC.

So, do we believe Jesus of Nazareth is the Promised Messiah? We know that Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, was an *actual man of history*, as many other historians (many secular) document this: Cornelius Tacitus (born 52 AD), Lucian, Flavius Josephus (born 37 AD), Suetonius (born 120 AD), Pliny the Younger (born 112 AD), Tertullian (born 197 AD), and more.

Let's take a look at what Jesus said of Himself.

- Jesus acted like He had the right and ability to forgive sins.
- Jesus was worshipped as God and accepted it.
- Jesus claimed to be God.
- Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.
- Jesus said His words will not pass away.
- He said God was "My Father."
- He said that He and the Father are One.
- He said that if you have seen Him, you've seen the Father.
- He said that He would be crucified (prophesying His own death).
- He said that He would rise up again (prophesying His resurrection).
- He said that He would go to the Father, yet come back again.
- He claimed to be the King of the Jews.
- He claimed to have a kingdom.

And his followers, who followed Him for three years, accepted all of these things as truth. In fact, they found him to be *sinless*.

So what does this make the man Jesus? Besides the fulfilled prophecy, here are some conclusions we must draw:

1. Jesus was lying (not believing what He said, but fooling others to believe it).
2. Jesus was a lunatic (actually believing the things He said).
3. Jesus is who He said He was.

So why do most major religions *who reject Him as God/Son of God* claim that He was a great prophet? At the very least even the secular community says that He was a moral (perhaps the most moral) man. But think about it—how can you see a man as a great moral teacher and example if he was a liar? How can you accept that Jesus said what He did, yet view Him as just a man that you may want to emulate? He spoke very controversial words—that is not in dispute. His identity is in dispute. Was He a lunatic? Was He a liar? What would He have to gain from these two options?

So what is the other option? *That He was telling the truth.* As C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity*,

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us...He did not intend to.”

And lastly, let’s not forget that it was actually recorded many times over that this man Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. He was seen by many after His death. So what do we do with that information? Disregard it, even though it is recorded in numerous books throughout the New Testament, books that are the most highly regarded among the works of antiquity? It was a fraud, perpetrated by those who wanted to fool us all? Let’s consider the different scenarios regarding the resurrection —

How was He doing physically throughout His arrest and trial and sentence of crucifixion? He was first in agony in the garden, sweating so profusely that it was like as drops of blood, obviously in great emotional and mental anguish. Then He was up all night taking part in 3 Jewish trials (Annas the high priest, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, then again formally before the whole Sanhedrin). This ended with Him being spit on, blindfolded, beaten and slapped by the officers. Then in the morning Jesus goes through 3 more trials (Pilate, Herod, then Pilate again). Then Jesus is scourged; and although the Jews had a limit of 40 blows (always making sure to only give 39 as to not exceed this), the Romans had no such limit. Jesus was scourged to the point that most of the flesh was removed from His back side, leaving Him very close to death. Then, they put a robe on Him, along with a crown of thorns (the thorns being close to 1 ½ inches long as is found in Palestine). They then beat Him and spit on Him, pushing the thorns deeper into His head.

Then they took off the robe, which would have now begun to adhere to His wounds. This would have broken them open again.

Then Jesus carried His own cross (probably just the crossbeam) to the place of His death (part of the way), approximately 1 ½ miles.

They tried to give Him wine and gall to dull His senses, but He did not take it after He tasted what it was. He was then crucified. The act of crucifixion involved 18” spikes driven into both hands and both feet. The process of death was that while hanging, the person would actually drown in his own body fluids. If the person raised themselves up to breathe, that would bring excruciating pain in His feet. If he let down to hang, he again couldn’t breathe. This was the process that eventually would lead to death. This would

and could actually go on for days before the person would succumb to asphyxiation. The merciful thing to do was to break the person's legs, allowing them to drown quickly.

However, Jesus' legs were never broken (in fulfillment of one prophecy). But, He died quickly...after just 6 hours. After He died, His side was split open by a spear to prove that He was dead.

In the burial process, Jesus' body would have been prepared in the following way: 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes were mixed together with cloth to encase the body. This would have hardened and effectively "mummified" the corpse. Jesus was then placed in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. This tomb was hewn out of rock, having never been used before. The stone placed over the entrance was quite large, taking 20 men to move it (the Codex Bezae text cites this. We know that 3 women couldn't move it because in Mark 16:1-4 we read that they were worried about who would move it for them). The purpose of the stone was to prevent any grave tampering.

After His burial a Roman guard was stationed at the gravesite. This guard would have been armed and highly trained and disciplined (as Romans were). The sole responsibility of the guard was to stop anyone from tampering with Jesus' body.

A seal was then placed across the stone. This seal was a string that stretched across the stone and then was sealed with a Roman seal, in wax, to indicate whether tampering had occurred. The well-known penalty for tampering with the seal was death.

*These things really did happen.* It is recorded as a historical event that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified by Roman soldiers. He did indeed go through horrific bodily harm, ultimately leading to His death.

Now, what do we believe about His resurrection? Do we believe the accounts recorded in the New Testament? Or do we not? There is first and foremost an historical aspect to this that cannot be denied. First Jesus was in the tomb, then He was not in the tomb. This must be explained. Now that we have the facts (remember that the accuracy of the testimony is not in question), here are our choices if we choose not to believe in His resurrection—

- Jesus' body was stolen. Can we accept this? If we do then we must explain the following:
  - The guard's testimony said otherwise.
  - The disciples were cowards, hardly brave in this sense to pull off a grave robbery.
  - They didn't even understand the prophecies that Jesus had foretold about Himself.
  - The guard would have been killed if he had been sleeping on duty (he was not killed).

- If the guard was sleeping on duty, he most definitely would have heard the stone being moved.
- The disciples were never arrested or accused of theft.
- How was the stone moved?
- Jesus was not really dead; he was still barely alive and exited the tomb Himself.
  - Re-read the physical punishments He went through.
  - Then explain how He was able to even move.
  - How did He move the stone?
  - Don't forget the 75 pounds of hardened shell encasing him.
  - Also, His grave clothes were still where He had lain. (Imagine Him getting up, covered in 75 pounds of hardened myrrh and aloe, breaking free of that then neatly laying His clothes in order to deceive many. Then He Superman-like rolls the stone. Oh yeah, the soldier guard is taking a break somewhere else?)
  - Then, on His mangled feet (from the 18" spikes), He walks 7 miles to Emmaus, talking to some of His disciples who are none the wiser.
  - Ridiculous theory.
- The women went to the wrong tomb! And all the others did too!
  - Not viable—Joseph of Arimathea knew his own tomb.

If we do not believe that Jesus was resurrected, then we must explain the absence of His body. And note that all the Jews had to do to quell this damaging rumor was to produce the body of Jesus. They could not do it.

So to end, let's ask again the same question—why do we believe the Bible? Do we believe it because someone told us to? Because someone said it was a “holy” book? No, we believe it because of its history. We believe what is written within it because it has proven itself to be true...against all natural odds...over and over and over again. We believe it because it goes beyond being just the writings of men—it contains the writings of men who were moved along by the One Breath of God, orchestrating every word to be in its final form *the complete revelation of God Himself*. It contains everything we need to know about the man Jesus who was God in the flesh, making Himself known to man in such a way that man could understand. Yet for all of this revelation we see that man, time and time again, denies the Words of God (either spoken or written) and ultimately kills anyone and everyone who dares to speak something contrary to their social, economic, and political platforms and beliefs.

Reviewing all that was said concerning the Old Testament and the New, can the same be said of the Quran? Of Mohammed? Can it stand up to the same tests? Can any religious book, for that matter?

## HERMENEUTICS

Biblical hermeneutics is the theory and practice of biblical interpretation. It's the set of rules we employ in order to understand the meaning of what we are reading. Not surprisingly, there are hundreds of different interpretations when it comes to the Bible; so the real question is, who is right and who is wrong? How do we know the rules we follow for interpretation are correct?

The answer is multi-faceted yet simple. The closer you get to truth, the fewer the existence of seeming "contradictions." The closer you get to the truth, the more each verse and passage fits perfectly with other verses and passages. The closer you get to the truth, the less mental gymnastics one needs to do in order to force things to make sense. A clearer and clearer picture emerges. And so it should; the Spirit of God is our Teacher—

1 Corinthians 2:9-13

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

John 15:26

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."

John 16:13-15

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

### RULES OF BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

These rules are not exhaustive, but they do give us a framework in which to study and understand what we're reading. The following list is not in order of importance—

1. Start at the beginning of the Bible and end at the end.

- This sets forth certain principles, such as the 7-day *restoration* account in Genesis, which establishes the 7-day *structure* of Scripture. This sets up the concept that all of Scripture (and consequently the structure of time as we know it) moves toward a 7<sup>th</sup> day rest.
  - Genesis 1:2b-2:3 is the foundation of God's revelation to man.
2. Employ proper use of exegesis.
- The text cannot mean something different today than what the original author intended it to mean (this is from a strictly literal sense of reading and understanding the text).
  - We need to take into account (when possible) the identity of the author, who his intended audience was, and why the book was written in order to set proper context.
  - Historical and literary context is essential. No verse or passage can be divorced from its surrounding context.
3. Scripture must interpret Scripture and is its own best commentary.
- Man's commentary is secondary.
  - One does not need a theological degree to understand God's Word.
  - Concepts in Scripture are explained using *numerous passages* throughout the Bible; there is rarely an instance where interpretations are found in only one verse. (I say "rarely" and not "never" because it would be presumptuous to say so with certainty.) Isaiah 28:9-10 explains exactly how this works: precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.
4. Every word of Scripture is inspired by God and therefore every word has meaning.
- Nothing written in Scripture is happenstance or unimportant.
  - Using a "functional equivalent" approach when translating or understanding Scripture (this is the "broad stroke" approach) minimalizes (and many times confuses) the truths found in Scripture. Each word was originally written in a specific order, in a specific way, for a reason. Therefore we need to stick with proper *word-for-word* translations (more about this in the next section).
  - *However*, we rely on translators to give us our current English version of the scriptures and *translators make mistakes*. So, we need to use additional word study tools to dig into the Scriptures using the original languages.<sup>109</sup>
  - One of the best ways to understand the meaning of various words is to find where else they are used in Scripture and use the context of their overall usage to determine their meaning. A concordance is very useful for this.

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<sup>109</sup> This seems monumentally intimidating at first. But it is immensely rewarding when time and effort is given to understand the original languages.

5. There are multiple layers of meaning to God's Word:
  - Not only the historical, textual meaning but also deeper spiritual truths.
  - There are primary and secondary (and many times more) applications to God's Word. This can easily be seen when Old Testament passages— which are seemingly about a certain OT character—are quoted in the New Testament as pertaining to Jesus.
  - The “milk vs. meat” idea is an example of this (Hebrews 6:1-3).
6. Scripture is highly “typical” in nature.
  - “God structured His revelation to man after a fashion in which not only true, correct history is presented but this history is highly *typical* in nature. God, within His sovereign control of all matters, brought things to pass after such a fashion (within the history of the earth, angels, and man) that He could, at a later time, have these events to draw upon in order to teach His people the deep things surrounding Himself, His plans, and His purposes. And this would be accomplished mainly through types and corresponding antitypes.” – Arlen Chitwood
  - The “typology” of the Old Testament is the “picture language” in which the doctrines of the New Testament are prefigured (the brazen serpent and the crucifixion are one such example, John 3:14-15).
  - You cannot understand Leviticus without Hebrews, or Daniel without Revelation, or the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion without Isaiah 53— *types and antitypes*.
  - “The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained.”<sup>110</sup>
  - See the last part of the Appendix for more details on this.
7. The Bible is ONE book with a main storyline—it has a beginning, an end, and a plethora of characters in-between.
  - Each book of the Bible fits together to form the central plot, but individually each book develops or teaches certain points regarding the whole.
  - The main word picture (plot) of the Bible is about the person and work of Jesus Christ.
8. Scripture uses both literal and figurative language.
  - The literal rendering should be supposed first.
  - Figurative language is usually expressed as such and the meaning is always explained somewhere in Scripture (this is not talking about typology, which is a different process altogether).
9. A useful tool in understanding the spiritual truth of a word or passage is to look at the context in which it is first used—this is the “Law of First-Mention” principle.

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<sup>110</sup> This is a quote by St. Augustine, who many consider the most significant figure in all of Christian theology and philosophy, next to Paul. I believe this concise quote is worthy of repeating; however, I do not ascribe much to St. Augustine's theological conclusions. That, though, is a topic for another study.

- This is simply believing that God sets a pattern of usage perfectly at the beginning, and since He is perfect in everything, He cannot and does not deviate from perfection. Hence, the first establishes all else.
- This tool of interpretation is based on the belief that the *order of the books* in our Bible is God-ordained and therefore the first time a word appears in the Bible— even if it is not the first time it appears *chronologically*— its usage and meaning are established.

## TRANSLATIONS

The original books of the Bible were written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The majority of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with only parts of the Book of Daniel written in Aramaic. The New Testament books were written in ancient Koine Greek (with a few passages in Aramaic, which was the primary spoken language of first century Judea and Galilee). Today there are hundreds of different English versions of the Bible available (and thousands of versions in other languages), each one varying from the other based on how the translators chose to translate one language into another and which manuscripts they used as a starting point. So how do we know which translation is the closest to the originals and therefore the best to use?

There are basically three different types of translation *styles* used when translators create the different versions of the Bible. The first is called “formal equivalence” (also called “word for word”), which attempts to keep as close to the “form” of the Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, both words and grammar, as can be conveniently put into understandable English. The second is called the “functional equivalence” (also called “dynamic”), which attempts to keep the meaning of the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic but puts their words and idioms into what would be the normal way of saying the same thing in English. This attempts to “update” matters of language, grammar, and style. The last style of translation is the “free translation” (also called “paraphrasing”), which attempts to translate the ideas from one language to another, with less concern about using the exact words or the original.

There’s another facet to Bible translating: while the *type* of translation equivalence used is important (formal, functional, or free), of equal importance is *which group of manuscripts (called “texts”) did the English translators base their translation equivalence on, and why?* Since there are no actual original books/letters of the Bible in existence, what we currently have are copies of copies of copies of the originals, which are called “manuscripts.” These were copied by scribes and the copies differ slightly from one another. All Bible translators – regardless of which language they are translating into – use some form of “ancient” Hebrew collection of manuscripts and some form of “ancient” Greek collection of manuscripts as their starting point; there are *many* texts/groups of manuscripts available for them to use and they differ greatly. So when choosing an English translation, one should also figure out which group of manuscripts/texts are the “best” (most accurate) to use.<sup>111</sup> That’s the subject of much debate and won’t be discussed here (too vast of a subject for our purposes, but worthy to be researched).

[For example, the KJV and NKJV used the *Textus Receptus* for the New Testament and the *Masoretic* texts for the Old Testament, from which they both use the formal equivalence

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<sup>111</sup> Proper Bible study should employ many different Bible versions and Bible tools. For example, I use NKJV in my daily Bible readings because I like the flow of the English rendering, and NASB for comparisons when studying (utilizing its use of capital letters when an OT passage is quoted in the NT). I use Strong’s concordance (based on KJV) and CLV (Concordance Literal Version – a concordance and hyper-formal translation in one) for even deeper studies. Also, having access to the original languages using an interlinear is important, as well as tools that explain Greek and Hebrew grammar and parsing. *The Complete Word Study New Testament* (and its counterpart for the Old Testament) by Spiros Zodhiates is an excellent resource for this, as well as *The Englishman’s Greek Concordance of the New Testament* by George V. Wigram and the website scripture4all.org. PowerBible software is also invaluable.

(word for word translation). The NASB used *Nestle-Aland's Novum Testamentum Graece* for the New Testament and the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (which is essentially the Masoretic texts, as preserved in the Leningrad Codex) for the Old Testament, along with the Dead Sea Scrolls); it also employs the formal equivalence/word for word translation.]

In the following pages we'll be looking at and comparing specific examples from Scripture of the differences we find in the many English versions; we'll compare translation *styles*, the different groups of manuscripts, and distinctions in word *choices*. Below each Scripture passage will be some questions and comments to get you to reflect on whether a given translation actually alters the meaning and/or theme.

## **TRANSLATION STYLES**

Here are three different English versions of the Bible; each representing a different style of translation used:

- King James Version, which uses the formal equivalence, or “word for word” style of translation.
- New International Version, which uses the functional equivalence, or “dynamic” style of translation.
- New Living Translation, which uses the free translation, or “paraphrasing” style of translation.

Acts 19:16

KJV—

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh,** justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, **received up into glory.**

NIV—

Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: **Christ appeared in the flesh** and was shown to be righteous by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and was announced to the nations. He was believed on in the world and was **taken up into heaven.**

NLT—

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: **He appeared in a body,** was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, **was taken up in glory.**

- While the KJV is saying that Jesus was actually “God in the flesh”, the others are simply saying that this man Jesus, the Christ, appeared in an actual, fleshly body. Can you see the difference?

- Was Jesus taken up into heaven, or was he received up into glory? Glory and heaven are two different ideas.

#### Matthew 24:41

KJV—

Two [women shall be] grinding **at the mill**; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

NIV—

Two women will be grinding **with a hand mill**; one will be taken and the other left.

NLT—

Two women will be grinding **flour at the mill**; one will be taken, the other left.

- Were the women at the mill, or were they grinding with a hand mill? Were they grinding flour? I know that this doesn't seem like a big issue, but when you find in the scriptures that things like "bread" and "Egypt" and "leaven" actually symbolize deeper things ("the word of God", the "world", and a corrupting agent, respectively), then each word matters.

#### Matthew 5:22

KJV—

But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his **brother without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

NIV—

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his **brother** will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

NLT—

But I say, if you are angry with **someone**, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

- Being angry with your brother "without a cause" is a lot different from just being angry with him.
- In the New Testament, the term "brother" is used to reference those that are "of the faith." Therefore the inclusion, or exclusion, of the word "brother" changes its meaning.

## John 8:25

KJV—

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

NIV—

"Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been claiming all along," Jesus replied.

NLT—

"Tell us who you are," they demanded. Jesus replied, "I am the one I have always claimed to be."

- Is Jesus talking about what He's been saying "from the beginning," or just since He's started His ministry? "The beginning" can point back to the beginning of God's Word, as the apostle John does in the first few verses of his gospel, or not.

## 1 John 5:7-8

KJV—

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

NIV—

7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

NLT—

7 So we have these three witnesses... 8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood-and all three agree.

- In numerous other places in scripture we see the distinction between "heaven" and "earth." This is of primary importance when reading the promises to Abraham, and the proclamation of the offer of the kingdom found in the New Testament (which points to the heavenly part of the kingdom, not the earthly).
- Notice in the KJV that the three that bear witness "in earth" are different than those that bear record in heaven. Why are they not differentiated in the other two translations?
- "Agreeing," and "agreeing in one" are similar ideas, but different.

## Hebrews 1:3

KJV—

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding **all things** by the word of his power, when he had **by himself** purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

NIV—

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining **all things** by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

NLT—

The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains **the universe** by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.

- Is it important that Christ purged our sins “by Himself,” because that phrase is absent in the NIV.
- Is the phrase “all things” the same as saying “the universe”? Check out Colossians 1:16, 20 and what it says “all things” are.

## Matthew 1:25

KJV—

And knew her not till she had brought forth her **firstborn** son: and he called his name JESUS.

NIV—

But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a **son**. And he gave him the name Jesus.

NLT—

But she remained a virgin until her **son** was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

- Being a “son” and being a “firstborn” son are distinctly different. Does it matter here?

## Romans 8:14-15

KJV—

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 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.

NIV—

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

NLT—

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”

- Being a child of God is different than being a son of God. The Greek language has a distinct word for “child” and a distinct word for “son.” Hebrews 12:5-8 teaches this. Do these versions make that distinction?
- The word for “adoption” is “son-placement” and has nothing to do with becoming a child of God, as the NLT would infer.

## Luke 4:18 (a quote from Isaiah 61:1-2)

KJV—

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

NIV—

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

NLT—

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors,

- Notice that the phrase, “heal the brokenhearted” is only in the KJV. This is a quote from Isaiah 61:1-2; the NIV and NLT have it in their version of Isaiah but leave it out here in Luke. Why? Does it matter?

- Preaching deliverance/freedom to someone is a lot different than preaching to them that they WILL BE delivered/released. We know that in fact the ones that Jesus was preaching to did not accept his offer; they were not delivered, but others were.
- Yes, essentially, from a broad perspective, these verses are saying (kind of) the same thing. Does it matter that it is different?

## **MANUSCRIPT SOURCES**

The following comparisons are from 2 Bible versions that employed the “formal equivalent” style of translation, yet used different manuscript groups as their source. The KJV version used the *Textus Receptus* codex of manuscripts for the NT and the Masoretic texts for the OT. The NASB used *Nestle-Aland's Novum Testamentum Graece* for the NT and the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (which is essentially the Masoretic texts, as preserved in the Leningrad Codex) for the OT, along with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

### Mark 10:21

KJV—

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **take up the cross**, and follow me.

NASB—

Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, ... follow Me."

- The “take up the cross” part is found elsewhere in other scriptures, and describes what following Jesus looks like. Given the context of this verse, which translation seems more accurate?

### Mark 10:24

KJV—

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it **for them that trust in riches** to enter into the kingdom of God!

NASB—

The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is ... to enter the kingdom of God!

- Again, missing words from the NASB. It changes the meaning, but is that important?

#### Luke 4:4

KJV—

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word of God.**

NASB—

And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.' ... "

- Missing words again.

#### Psalms 8:5

KJV—

For thou hast made him a little lower than **the angels**, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

NASB—

Yet You have made him a little lower **than God**, and You crown him with glory and majesty!

- Big difference. Was Jesus made lower than God or the angels? Hebrews 2:7 quotes this verse and both KJV and NASB use the word "angels" in that verse.

#### Philippians 2:5-7

KJV—

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, **thought it not robbery to be equal with God:** 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

NASB—

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped**, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

- Did Jesus consider Himself "equal" with God, or not?

## 1 John 4:3

KJV—

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is **come in the flesh** is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

NASB—

and every spirit that does not confess Jesus **...** is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

- Not confessing that Jesus came *in the flesh* is a lot different from just not confessing Him.

## Revelation 21:24

KJV—

And the nations **of them which are saved** shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

NASB—

And the nations **...** shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.

- Just “the nations,” or “the nations of them which are saved”?

## Colossians 2:18

KJV—

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into **those things which he hath not seen**, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

NASB—

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, **taking his stand on visions he has seen**, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

- Did he see something or not?

## Acts 17:22

KJV—

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

NASB—

So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

- Religion and superstition are two different words, conjuring up different ideas within one's mind.

## Colossians 1:14

KJV—

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

NASB—

in whom we have redemption ..., the forgiveness of sins.

- Is knowing that the redemption comes through His blood an important detail? Or is something that the reader already knows and assumes? Read Hebrews 9:22 and the surrounding context to determine if the mention of blood is necessary.

## Revelation 15:3

KJV—

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

NASB—

And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!"

- "King of saints" and "King of nations" are two different things.

## 1 John 5:13

KJV—

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, **and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

NASB—

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life ...

- I imagine that the NASB translators thought that this was redundant, and therefore it wasn't needed. However, knowing that we must first believe in order to be saved (spirit), and then must continue to believe in order to be saved (soul)... maybe it is in there for a reason?

## Galatians 6:15

KJV—

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new **creature.**

NASB—

For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new **creation.**

- “Creature” and “creation” have two different meanings.

## Galatians 4:7

KJV—

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir **of God through Christ.**

NASB—

Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir **through God.**

- An heir through Christ is different from an heir through God, although they are one and the same. And being an heir of God (which would literally be “God’s heir”) through Christ is different than saying an heir through God.

## Ephesians 3:9

KJV—

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

NASB—

and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

- “For ages” is a lot longer than “from the beginning of the world”. The world that we know was created at the beginning of this age.
- Yes, Jesus is God and God is Jesus, but saying that all things were created by Jesus Christ affirms His divinity.

## Colossians 1:2

KJV—

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NASB—

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father...

- Again, something's been left out.

## WORD CHOICES

Let's take a look at something else that affects how we read and interpret the different English translations of the Bible. Individual word translation can change the meaning of a whole thought – and sometimes even the doctrine – that the writer intended to convey. Here are some examples, along with commentary.

### 1 Timothy 2:9-14

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

- The word “woman” is actually the word “wife”, not just “woman” in general. The word for “man” is to be read literally, “the husband”. This entire passage is misunderstood primarily because of the lack of distinction of these two words.
- Also, “professing godliness” should be understood in terms of her actually preaching righteous behavior to others...not in the sense that if she claims to be godly she needs to dress this way. We can understand this in the sense of modesty being a necessity to those who wish to preach to others. Also, “shamefacedness” is actually translated as “reverence” [an admirable quality, which we are to have when we approach God] in other passages. Entire church doctrines have been built on this error.

#### Hebrews 12:5-7

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

- The word “son” is the Greek word “huios”, which is often translated as “child”, mistakenly. The Greeks have a word for “child”—“teknon”. Being a son to God and being a child to God are two different things in scripture. A son (in particular a firstborn son) receives an inheritance; a child does not. A son can rule in God’s house, a child cannot.

#### 1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

- The word translated “eternal” is actually the Greek noun “age”, but in adjective form. So literally, it should read “age-y”. It is a descriptive term for the noun “life”. The Western mind thinks in terms of infinity, whereas the Greek mind did not. They thought in terms of “ages”—periods of time, with a beginning and an end. They could express ideas like “infinity” by stacking ages upon each other, literally “age upon age”. This is probably the most confusing, and been the most damaging, of the poor word translations found in the English versions of Scripture.

#### Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

- The word “heaven” should actually be translated “the heavens”, because in the Greek it contains a definite article (THE) and the noun “heaven” is in the plural form. How

could the translators mess that up? It may have something to do with man's idea of "Heaven" and it being some ethereal place of clouds, gold, and happiness. In reality, "the heavens" is a term for that which makes up the sky and the reaches of space beyond the earth, as well as the dwelling place of God the Father (which is actually called the "third heaven" and "the heaven" [singular]). The birds fly in it (we can see parts of it) and the stars are in it. It has a broad meaning, and it has a narrow meaning, depending on the context of the passage. Unfortunately, this poor translation has done nothing but muddle up our view of this "kingdom."

#### Psalm 16:10

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

- Here's an example of a mistranslation of the Hebrew word 'Sheol' as "hell." Sheol is the name of an actual place (which is not "hell"); it is simply the place of the dead. It has nothing to do with eternally damned people going to a place of torment. Actually, the word "hell" is very misleading because the Scriptures never present this topic so narrowly. In reality, *hell* as the Western Christian mind has been taught to understand it, does not exist in the Bible.
- Sheol, which is 'Hades' in Greek, is always connected with man's *soul* (the place where one's *soul* goes after physical death, differentiated from the spirit), and it is a place of *temporary* holding (just as we saw when looking at Jesus' three parts after His death but before His resurrection).

#### Luke 16:23

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

- This is the Greek word 'Hades,' which is the same place as 'Sheol.' Same as above.

#### Matthew 18:9

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

- This is the Greek word 'Gehenna,' which is an actual place that is different from 'Hades.' Gehenna is always referred to as the alternative to entering the kingdom (described as "life" in this verse). Gehenna is associated with "weeping and gnashing of teeth" as well as "the outer darkness."
- There is one other place in the scriptures associated with our Western idea of *hell*, and that is the "lake of fire." The lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels, and is also referred to as the place for the unsaved.

## **EXAMPLE OF USING THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES**

What we are seeing time and time again is the necessity to go to the original languages in order to get the most precise definitions and meaning out of the Scriptures. The following passage from the Gospel of John is a great example of how studying the original languages can open up the depths of God's Word. While the English translation does give us a general understanding of the interchange between Jesus and Peter, it does not accurately portray *precisely* what is occurring between them.

With just the English, we read this:

John 21:15-17 NKJV

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend [KJV uses the word "feed"] My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

After reading it this way, one may wonder why Jesus asks Peter *three* times if he loves him, since according to the English version Peter answers Him in the affirmative each time. We may also wonder why Peter was *grieved* about this, since he answers Jesus' question positively each time, and Peter knows that Jesus knows how he feels about Him. We may also think – if reading the KJV – Jesus' thrice used statement about Peter feeding His sheep is intentionally repetitive to put emphasis on the "feeding." We wouldn't find many answers to these questions from the English version only.

Now let's look at the passage with the Greek words and tenses added -

John 21:15-17

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me ['agapas' present tense, literally "are you loving me"] more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know ['oidas' perfect tense] that I love ['philo' present tense "I am being fond of"] You." He said to him, "Feed ['boske' present tense "be grazing"] My lambs ['arnia' "lambkins"]."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love ['agapas' present tense] Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know ['oidas' perfect tense] that I love ['philo' present tense] You." He said to him, "Tend ['poimaine' present tense "be shepherding"] My sheep ['probate' "sheep"]."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [‘phileis’ present tense “are you being fond of”] Me?" Peter was grieved [‘elupethe’ “sorrowful”] because He said to him the third time, "Do you love [‘phileis’] Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know [‘oidas’ perfect tense] all things; You know [‘ginoskeis’ present tense “are knowing”] that I love [‘philo’ present tense] You." Jesus said to him, "Feed [‘boske’ present tense] My sheep [‘probate’]."

With the added depth of the original Greek words, we see *a lot more* happening in this conversation. It literally reads like this:

John 21:15-17

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you deeply love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You are aware that I am fond of You." He said to him, "Feed My young lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you deeply love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You are aware that I am fond of You." He said to him, "Shepherd My flock of sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, are you fond of Me?" Peter was sorrowful because He said to him the third time, "Are you fond of Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You are aware of all things; You know that I am fond of You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My flock of sheep."

When read this way, we can see exactly why Peter is grieved by Jesus’ three questions and why Jesus probes Peter three times. Peter is unable to tell the Lord that he **deeply loves** Him; he is only able to speak about his fondness for Him. *And this grieves him*. Peter knows that Jesus knows this... and Jesus confirms it with the switch in His last question; He no longer asks Peter if he deeply loves Him but uses Peter’s words right back at him.

Jesus’ three statements to Peter concerning what Jesus requires Peter to do is more detailed, isn’t it? Feed My young lambs... Shepherd My flock... Feed My flock.

This passage is made all the more powerful if we keep reading the next verses –

John 21:18-19

18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."

19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he [Peter] would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

Jesus follows with prophetic words about Peter's future death, and a reiteration of the same words Jesus spoke to Peter at the beginning of His ministry, no doubt calling to Peter's mind when He first called him –

Matthew 4:18-20

18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

## **PUNCTUATION**

There is one last point to make regarding the English translations and the errors that they contain. The original languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic contained no punctuation. So when we read a sentence in modern English that contains punctuation, making the reader understand the thought a certain way, we need to stop and ask ourselves if what we are reading is the actual intention of the original; it may just be the assumption of the translators. Here is one example:

Luke 23:43

And Jesus said unto him [the thief on the cross next to Him], "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise."

- This verse, written in just this way, means that Jesus is telling this man that he would be with Jesus, in Paradise, that very day.

What would this sentence mean if you moved the comma to *after* "today," so that it would read:

And Jesus said unto him (the thief on the cross next to Him), "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

- It now means that Jesus is informing this man on that particular day (*today*) that he would be with Jesus in Paradise at some later point in time. And this rendering is the correct way the Greek grammar would have it be written.

Isaiah 28:9-10

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."

- This passage makes us think that there are 4 consecutive questions being asked, with emphasis on the last 2 questions being perhaps rhetorical (or sarcastic) *negative* answers to the first 2 questions. But if it is written this way –

"Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk, those just drawn from the breasts. 10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."

- Without the last 2 question marks we now have 2 questions and 2 definitive answers to the questions. Very different, isn't it? And the Hebrew structure of this sentence shows us that this latter rendering is the correct way to read it.

Hopefully this has given you some food for thought on the vast subject of English translations. They are not all created equally! You can see why there needs to be some research on your part in order to determine the validity of the wording; the Scriptures as a whole must be congruent and complementary, without contradictions or errors.

## TYPOLOGY IN THE SCRIPTURES

Typology—which is the proper use of *types* and *antitypes* in the study of Scripture—is an important element to grasp if one wants to correctly understand the Word of God. So what is typology? It's based on the belief that God structured His revelation to man (the Bible as we currently know it) after a fashion in which not only true, correct history is presented but this history is highly *typical* in nature. Meaning, God, within His sovereign control of all things, brought events to pass in such a way, *and recorded them in such a way* that He could, at a later time, have these events to draw upon in order to teach His people the deep spiritual truths surrounding Himself, His plans, and His purposes. The *type*, which is recorded first, is simply a recorded historical account. The *antitype*, which comes **after** the type, is a *spiritual truth* that comes to light by seeing a pattern of similarity when comparing it to the historical account. Let's unpack this a bit more by looking at specific Scripture passages and examples.

The word “type” in Greek is ‘tupos,’ though it is rarely translated as such. It is rendered as “print,” “form,” “figure,” “example,” or “pattern.” The Greek word for “antitype” is ‘antitupos’ and is only found twice in Scripture, translated as “copy” or “figure” (or kept as “antitype” in the NKJV). Here are some of those verses:

Romans 5:14, 19

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come...19 For **as by** one man's disobedience many were made sinners, **so also by** one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

- Adam is the type; Christ is the antitype.

Acts 7:44

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern [“type”] that he had seen...

Hebrews 9:24

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies [“antitypes”] of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...

- The earthly tabernacle, with its holy places, are the antitype; the heavenly tabernacle, with its holy places, is the type.
- The earthly holy places were but *a copy and a shadow* of the heavenly.

### 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things became our examples ["types"], to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples ["types"], and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

- The things that happened to the first generation out of Egypt are the type; the things that happen—*and can still happen*—to the church is the antitype.

### Philippians 3:17

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

- Paul, and those who walk in the same righteous manner as he, are the type; his brethren in the church who are being called to follow his example would be the antitype (if they followed).

### 1 Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

- The 8 people on the ark, who were faithfully obedient to the Lord and saved *through water* from His wrath because of it, are the type. The church's dictate of baptism (going *through water*), being our answer of a good conscience toward God (our pledge to live faithfully obedient), saves us (yet future, if our lives reflect that pledge) from God's wrath and is the antitype.

Now let's look at some examples of scriptures that don't use the words 'tupos' and 'antitupos' yet still make *typological* comparisons easy to see:

- 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."
- 1 Corinthians 15:45, "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."
- John 3:4, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."
- Matthew 24:37, "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."
- Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Reading and understanding the above verses appears pretty straight forward, since the text clearly states the type/antitype similarities, but there is still more beneath the surface of these passages to dig up. This is why there is much debate about the use of types/anti-types, whether this is an accurate system of hermeneutics or not. The problem with incorporating typology into Bible study is that people may stretch the recorded historical word pictures to teach things that are out of line with Scripture. But the problem with *not* studying the Bible in this manner is that people miss the great spiritual truths God has buried in His Word.<sup>112</sup>

The following exercise is designed to show you just some of the many Scriptures passages that describe this *typological* system of study. Consider the following verses and the corresponding questions they raise (taken from the NASB, which uses capital letters to denote when Old Testament passages are being quoted):

2 Timothy 3:14-17

[Paul writing to Timothy, a disciple of Christ that Paul mentored]

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- ALL Scripture is for the equipping of the man of God, and ALL Scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. Is there a limit to which Scriptures can be used to this effect? If so, what is the limit?
- Is "all" implying every single word, or the broad stroke of its general meaning? Where are the boundaries?
- Timothy knew the "sacred writings" from his childhood and Paul says they are able to give Timothy (an already redeemed man) "the wisdom" which leads to salvation

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<sup>112</sup> If we believe that the Bible is *God's very breath* and Jesus is *this Word made flesh*, then we must believe that there is no end to the spiritual truths contained within it. One can never get to the point that they've *finished* the Bible, as one would finish a novel. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man, and therefore endless.

through faith which is in Christ Jesus. This is referencing the salvation of the soul, not initial salvation, which necessitates that this “wisdom” from the sacred writings is for the mature man. Therefore, what are the limits of this wisdom, which Paul calls the “hidden wisdom” held in a “mystery” in 1 Corinthians 2:7?

#### 1Corinthians 10:1-12

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

6 Now these things happened as examples [literally “types”] for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. 7 And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.” 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day, 9 nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example [literally “type”], and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- This is obviously referring to ALL of the first generation (context dictates); therefore, to what extent do we use them as examples? Are only those things written in verses 7-10 examples we can use, or can we take the whole experience of that first generation found in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers? (Paul is not the only one who uses them as examples—the author of Hebrews does, too.)
- Since *the rock was Christ*, what does that mean? Shouldn’t we look back at the “rock” in these examples and see what it teaches us about Christ? What are the limits of what it teaches us?
- Verse 11 states that these things are examples to us and are written for our admonition—is that referring to what Paul writes now or what Moses wrote then? If Moses, then we can go back and read it and use it.
- Can we learn about baptism (which is scripturally a New Testament act) from verse 2? Why or why not?

#### Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, “IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.” 19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type. **(This word “type” is the Greek word “parabole.”)**

- Since Isaac was received back in a parabolic sense “from the dead,” that tells us he represented something or is being compared to something. (This word “parable” is more than just an allegory; the word “parable” literally means “to lay alongside of.” And we can see in Matthew 13 that parables contain *truth laid alongside another truth*, and these truths are intentionally hidden or veiled.)

#### Hebrews 9:1-10:22

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. 3 And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. 5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, 7 but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, 9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, 10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with

the blood. 22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

10:1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME; 6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE.

7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.'" 8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, NOR HAST THOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND UPON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," He then says, 17 "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." 18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is,

His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- The earthly tabernacle is obviously being compared with the heavenly, as is Christ Himself with the earthly sacrifices and service of the priesthood. Are we limited to just what is written in these two chapters? Shouldn't we be able to read a whole lot more out of the Mosaic Law and the institution of the earthly tabernacle? What are our limits?

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:36

...and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

- Jesus is the Lamb of God. This Lamb "takes away the sin of the world," which is a reference to the scapegoat of the Law. How do we know that it is, and what are we allowed to extrapolate?

1 Corinthians 5:7

Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

- Christ is our Passover and is sacrificed for us. Therefore we must go back to the Old Testament and draw the comparisons ourselves to the original story and picture of the Passover event. Where do we stop or start at making comparisons?
- There is mention of leaven and that we are "unleavened." How do we determine what that means? And since we are being called this in connection with a comment about Passover, do we go back to Exodus (where we find Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and see what we can draw from it?

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...

- "According to the Scriptures." Doesn't that mean that we have to use the Scriptures (which at the time this was written was only the Old Testament) to explain Christ's death, burial, and resurrection on the THIRD day?
- And where *exactly* do we see in the Old Testament that the Messiah was to rise again on the third day? It does not exist in a very literal sense—there is no prophet that

wrote explicitly, in *strictly literal* vocabulary, that the Messiah would die, be buried, and rise again on the third day. It is seen in veiled word pictures, inferences, poetry, and *types* like Jonah.

#### Deuteronomy 18:15-18

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 16 This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' 17 The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'"

- The context of this would lead us to believe that it is just a general statement regarding all of the future prophets, but future Scripture pinpoints this prophetic statement made by Moses as regarding the One who is to come, the Messiah. Read it below—

#### Acts 3:19-24

[Peter speaking to the nation of Israel] "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. 22 Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. 23 And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days..."

- Peter says that Christ is that Prophet spoken of by Moses. And Moses said "a prophet like me." What exactly does that mean, 'like Moses'? Was the prophet to look like Moses? Act like Moses? What would Moses and Jesus have in common? And aren't we then to look at Moses' life, compare it with Jesus' life, and note the similarities? This is where we can get great spiritual truths, such as Moses and Jesus were both rejected by their brethren *the first time*, but accepted (future for Jesus) the second time.

This same thing is spoken again by Stephen, as he spoke to the leaders of Israel—

Acts 7:33-37

[Stephen speaking to the Council of Israel (also called the Sanhedrin)] “BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘TAKE OFF THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND. 34 I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.’ 35 This Moses whom they disowned, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?’ is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.’”

- Stephen quotes the same verse in his statement to the Council (and after he’s done speaking he is stoned to death). Why does he pick out this verse and talk about Moses?
- Is there any significance to the comment regarding Moses being a “ruler and a judge,” a “deliverer”, and showing “wonders and signs”? Remember that they are drawing the comparison....so where are our limits?

Hebrews 12:24

... and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

- If Jesus’ blood speaks better than Abel’s, what did Abel’s blood say? Should we re-read Abel’s account in Genesis and get something out of it? Or are we just limited to what the author writes here?
- There’s a reason that the author writes “the blood of sprinkling.” That is a direct reference to the Levitical priesthood. It would have obviously made a connection with his audience (with all of the references to the priesthood and sanctuary/tabernacle it is assumed that the author of Hebrews was writing to fellow Christians with a Jewish background/understanding). So, shouldn’t we know what they would have known, in order to make the same connections? This would require a knowledge of the Old Testament Law, wouldn’t it?

Ephesians 5:21-31

...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. 22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for

her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

- This is an obvious reference to Adam and Eve from Moses' account in Genesis. Paul writes "for this cause..." There is much to learn about this connection he is drawing, so where do we go and what do we do? *We go to the Old Testament Scriptures.*

Continuing in Ephesians...

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

- *Christ and the church*—there's a picture being drawn here that we must explore. And to explore it we must go to the Old Testament Scriptures, because this was all that was available for Paul to use to teach with (that and Christ's own words, of course).

Luke24:13-27

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. 16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. 17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. 21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. 22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. 24 "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." **25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into**

**His glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.**

- "All that the prophets have spoken" was about Christ suffering and then entering into his glory. So Jesus Himself starts with Moses (who wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) to tell them in ALL the scriptures the things concerning Himself, and then uses ALL the prophets (the rest of the Old Testament). Where are the boundaries?

Continuing...

28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. 29 But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. 30 When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" This way of speaking (Moses and all the prophets) *opened up the scriptures*.

- Herein lies the answer to the type/antitype issue—"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while **He opened to us the scriptures?**"

***When you hear about or notice a connection using the Old Testament types and corresponding New Testament truths, your heart burns within you...the Holy Spirit is showing you and the scriptures are opened up.***

Continuing...

33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. 36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate it before them.

**44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."**

- Again, things about the Christ in the Law of Moses (first 5 books), the prophets (the rest of the OT), and in the Psalms—*that's everything in the Old Testament*.

Continuing—

**45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,**

- It is from using the Old Testament, *through the filter of the cross and resurrection*, that Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.
- Again, where was it written that Christ was to rise from the dead the third day? (Just using the law, the prophets, and the psalms.)

When we do this type of comparison—looking at a truth revealed in the New Testament by searching the Old Testament for the shadow or picture of the same truth—we see great spiritual truths opened up to us. Here are just a few examples:

### **TYPES/ANTITYPES—EXAMPLES**

#### **Adam & Eve/Christ & His Bride**

Adam is the type; Christ is the antitype

The woman is the type; the bride of Christ is the antitype

Genesis 2:20-24

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- Step 1: God causes a deep sleep to fall upon the man.
- Step 2: God takes one of Adam's ribs out of his side and then closes up the flesh at that place.
- Step 3: God fashions (Hebrew word 'banah' which means "to build") the rib into a woman.

- Step 4: God brings her to the man.

Now let's look at Christ and His bride—

Mark 15:37

And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last.

- Step 1: God causes a “deep sleep” to fall upon the Man. (Death is often called “falling asleep” in Scripture, note 2 Peter 3:4, “For ever since the fathers fell asleep...”)

John 19:33-34

...but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; 34 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

- Step 2: Jesus' side is opened up and blood and water come out.

Hebrews 9:22

And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

John 13:5-10

Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, “Lord, do You wash my feet?” 7 Jesus answered and said to him, “What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter.” 8 Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” 9 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” 10 Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

Matthew 16:18

[Jesus speaking] “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”

- Step 3: God takes the blood and water and builds it into the church, Christ's bride.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and

remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

- Step 4: God brings the bride to the Man.

### Isaac & Rebekah/Christ & His Bride

Isaac is the type; Christ the antitype

Abraham is the type; God the Father is the antitype

Rebekah is the type; the bride of Christ is the antitype

Sarah & Keturah are the type; Israel is the antitype

Water is the type; the Word of God is the antitype

1. Sarah dies. (Gen. 23)
2. Abraham sends his oldest servant to find a wife for his son. (Gen. 24:1-7)
3. The servant is in charge of all that Abraham owns. (Gen. 24:2)
4. Abraham tells the servant to go to his country and *his relatives* to find the wife. (Gen. 24:3,4,37,38,40)
5. Rebekah is found at a well, drawing extra water from the well. (Gen. 24:44-46)
6. Some members of the family try to delay Rebekah, to keep her from going. (Gen. 24:54-56)
7. Rebekah goes, one member from Abraham's family and not the whole family. (Gen. 24:59-60)
8. Rebekah meets Isaac between his home and her home. (Gen. 24:62-63)
9. Abraham remarries and is fruitful. (Gen. chapter 25)

Now let's compare with Christ and His bride—

1. Israel is set aside, figuratively in a place of death. (Matt. 21:43)
2. God sends His Servant, the Holy Spirit, to find a bride for His Son. (Acts 15:14)
3. The Holy Spirit is in charge of all that the Father owns. (John 16:13-15)
4. The bride must come from the family of God. (Rom. 8:16-17)
5. The bride will be found drawing deeply from the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17, Eph. 5:26)
6. Some try to delay the Christian from going forward. (2 Pet. 3:3-4)
7. Some Christians *will* go, some will stay behind. (Rev. 19:7)
8. The bride meets Christ between His current dwelling and theirs. (1 Thess. 4:17)
9. Israel is reestablished and is fruitful. (Isaiah chapters 11,12,27-just to name a few)

## David & Saul/Christ & Satan

David is the type; Christ is the antitype

Saul is the type; Satan is the antitype

1. Saul is the first king over Israel and is anointed by God. (1 Sam. 9:17, 10:1)
2. Saul has his kingdom taken away due to selfishness and disobedience. (1 Sam. 13:13, 15:11,26)
3. David is anointed to take Saul's place. (1 Sam. 16:13)
4. David does not immediately ascend the throne.
5. Saul desires to kill David and his men. (1 Sam. chapter 19)
6. David flees to the wilderness, outside of Saul's jurisdiction. (1 Sam. 22:1)
7. David gathers men to himself, from Saul's kingdom. (1 Sam. 22:2)
8. Saul kills priests, men of God, in his kingdom. (1 Sam. 22:17)
9. David does not touch Saul; he won't kill him even though he has the opportunity. (1 Sam. 23:5-7, 26:11)
10. Saul dies. (1 Sam. 31:3-6)

Now let's compare this with Christ and Satan—

1. Satan is the first king over the earth and is anointed by God. (Ezek. 28:13-14)
2. Satan has his kingdom taken away due to selfishness and disobedience. (Is.14:13-14, Ezek. 28:18)
3. Jesus is anointed to take Satan's place. (Acts 10:38, Matt. 2:2, Rev. 11:15)
4. Christ does not immediately ascend the throne.
5. Satan desires to eliminate Jesus and His followers.
6. Jesus is at the right hand of His Father, outside of Satan's jurisdiction. (Acts 2:33-35)
7. Jesus gathers people to Himself, out of the world. (John 17:6,16)
8. Satan attempts to destroy the souls of Christians, God's people, which effects "death." (1 Pet. 2:11, James 5:20)
9. We are not to "touch" Satan; we cannot kill him, or bind him, or do any such thing; the Lord will do it.
10. Satan is dethroned and destroyed. (Rev. 20:2, 10)

There are many more examples than this, no doubt endless, but the point of this brief part on typology is to get you to think about the Scriptures in a deeper way, and see the many ways God reveals His truths to us. Understanding types and antitypes is crucial for maturity in the faith for it brings to life the many hidden, deeper truths of God that can only be revealed by the Spirit of God—

1 Corinthians 2:7-13

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom

of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.<sup>9</sup> But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

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